

46180

JUDAISM

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
Pasadena, California

JAN 31 1972

JUDAISM AND LIBERALISM

Robert Gordis

Seymour Siegel

Steven S. Schwarzschild

Arthur J. Lelyveld

Richard L. Rubenstein

Abraham D. Beame

Alan W. Miller

Jacob Neusner

Judd L. Teller

IS THE SYNAGOGUE BECOMING A CHURCH, THE RABBI A PRIEST?

Henry Siegman

DEATH AS ESTRANGEMENT: THE HALAKHAH OF MOURNING

Emanuel Feldman

ISSUE No. 81 / VOLUME 21 / NUMBER 1 / \$2.25

WINTER 1972

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP

The American Jewish Congress is sponsoring the publication of JUDAISM: A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF JEWISH LIFE AND THOUGHT as part of its basic policy "to stimulate an informed awareness of Jewish affairs, encourage Jewish scholarship and adequate opportunities for Jewish education, and generally foster the affirmation of Jewish religious, cultural, and historic identity."

JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

The Board of Editors, composed of distinguished scholars and thinkers drawn from every segment of Jewish life, is vested with full authority and responsibility for the contents of this Journal. Views and opinions expressed in the articles and reviews are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the American Jewish Congress, which is sponsoring the publication of this Journal as a service to the American Jewish community and to all who seek to understand the nature of the Jewish tradition and its modern significance.

American Jewish Congress

JUDAISM: A QUARTERLY JOURNAL is published by the American Jewish Congress. It appears in January, April, July, and October. Office of Publication: 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Re-entered as second-class matter at Post Office, New York City, N.Y. Subscription in the United States and Canada, \$8.00 for one year, \$14.00 for two years, \$19.00 for three years; foreign subscription, \$9.00. Special rate for bulk (10 or more) and student subscriptions, \$5.00. Single issue, \$2.25; single issue abroad, \$2.50. Make checks payable to the order of JUDAISM, and send to: 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. A month's notice must be given of any change of address.

The Board of Editors invites articles, communications, comments and discussion for publication. Address: Editors, JUDAISM, 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Copyright © 1971 by the American Jewish Congress.



JUDAISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL

Issue 81 / Volume 21 / Number 1 / Winter 1972

The First Reader

3

JUDAISM AND LIBERALISM—MARRIAGE, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE: A Symposium

<i>By Way of Introduction</i>	ROBERT GORDIS	6
<i>The Radical Imperatives of Judaism</i>	STEVEN S. SCHWARZSCHILD	9
<i>Liberalism and the Jewish Interests</i>	RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN	16
<i>Liberalism is Indispensable</i>	ALAN W. MILLER	20
<i>An Anatomy of Liberalism— A Conservative View</i>	SEYMOUR SIEGEL	24
<i>In Defense of Liberalism</i>	ARTHUR J. LELYVELD	32
<i>A Call for a Reasoned Liberalism</i>	ABRAHAM D. BEAME	36
<i>Judaism, Jew and the Liberal Outlook</i>	JACOB NEUSNER	39
<i>The Jewish Experience with Liberalism</i>	JUDD L. TELLER	43
<i>How the Bible Begins</i>	HERSHEL SHANKS	51
<i>Death As Estrangement: the Halakhah of Mourning</i>	EMANUEL FELDMAN	59
<i>Is the Synagogue Becoming a Church, The Rabbi a Priest?</i>	HENRY SIEGMAN	67
<i>The Bible in Contemporary Israeli Humanism</i>	SHEMARYAHU TALMON	79
<i>Two Principles of Character Education in the Aggadah</i>	BERNARD MANDELBAUM	84

FOUR FIGURES REVISITED

<i>Samuel Hirsch's Absolute Religiosity</i>	GERSHON GREENBERG	93
<i>Martin Buber and Taoism</i>	JAMES A. MORAN	98
<i>M. Y. Berdichevsky on The Meaning of History</i>	SAMUEL Z. FISHMAN	104
<i>Introducing: Ernst Bloch</i>	HARRY SLOCHOWER	110

REVIEWS

<i>Political Expectation</i> by Paul Tillich	JOHN C. BENNETT	116
<i>Les Juifs</i> by Alain Guichard	HENRY WALTER BRANN	118
<i>The Ancient Synagogues of the Iberian Peninsula</i> by Don A. Halperin	NORMAN ROTH	122
<i>The New Religions</i> by Jacob Needleman and <i>The Golden Core of Religion</i> by Alexander Skutch	JOEL ROSENBERG	124

Editor

ROBERT GORDIS

Managing Editor

RUTH B. WAXMAN

Contributing Editors

JACOB B. AGUS, Baltimore, Md. • SELIG ADLER, Buffalo, N.Y. • ALEXANDER ALTMANN, Waltham, Mass. • MAX ARZT, New York, N.Y. • SALO W. BARON, New York, N.Y. • MEIR BEN-HORIN, Philadelphia, Pa. • HUGO BERGMAN, Jerusalem, Israel • BEN ZION BOKSER, New York, N.Y. • EUGENE B. BOROWITZ, New York, N.Y. • WILLIAM G. BRAUDE, Providence, R.I. • ARTHUR A. COHEN, New York, N.Y. • GERSON D. COHEN, New York, N.Y. • EMIL L. FACKENHEIM, Toronto, Canada • DAVID FLUSSER, Jerusalem, Israel • MARVIN FOX, Columbus, O. • SOLOMON B. FREEHOF, Pittsburgh, Pa. • MAURICE FRIEDMAN, Philadelphia, Pa. • THEODORE FRIEDMAN, Jerusalem, Israel • NAHUM N. GLATZER, Waltham, Mass. • JUDAH GOLDIN, New Haven, Conn. • ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN, Jerusalem, Israel • MAX GRUENEWALD, Millburn, N.J. • MENAHEM HARAN, Jerusalem, Israel • WILL HERBERG, Madison, N.J. • ABRAHAM J. HESCHEL, New York, N.Y. • ARTHUR HYMAN, New York, N.Y. • ERICH ISAAC, Ardsley, N.Y. • MAX KADUSHIN, New York, N.Y. • HORACE M. KALLEN, New York, N.Y. • MORDECAI M. KAPLAN, New York, N.Y. • MILTON R. KONVITZ, Ithaca, N.Y. • ARTHUR J. LELYVELD, Cleveland, Ohio • SOL LIPTZIN, Jerusalem, Israel • LEVI A. OLAN, Dallas, Texas • HARRY M. ORLINSKY, New York, N.Y. • JAKOB PETUCHOWSKI, Cincinnati, O. • LEO PFEFFER, New York, N.Y. • JOACHIM PRINZ, Newark, N.J. • EMANUEL RACKMAN, New York, N.Y. • NATHAN ROTENSTREICH, Jerusalem, Israel • MAURICE SAMUEL, New York, N.Y. • ZALMAN M. SCHACHTER, Winnipeg, Canada • JACOB D. SCHIFF, New York, N.Y. • DAVID S. SHAPIRO, Milwaukee, Wis. • DAVID WOLF SILVERMAN, New York, N.Y. • ERNST SIMON, Jerusalem, Israel • AARON STEINBERG, London, England • SHEMARYAHU TALMON, Jerusalem, Israel • SINAI UCKO, Herzliah, Israel • DAVID WEISS, New York, N.Y. • PAUL WEISS, New Haven, Conn. • TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN, New York, N.Y. • HARRY A. WOLFSON, Cambridge, Mass. • MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD, New York, N.Y.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God."—From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

The First Reader

The highlight of this issue is the Symposium on "Judaism and Liberalism—Marriage, Separation or Divorce." The background of the Symposium is presented in the special introduction. From the variety of views expressed by the symposiasts, one conclusion is clear. Whether Jews are to adopt a radical, liberal or conservative stance, it cannot be a generalized, unreflective and simplistic response. The attitude of Jews on any given issue must be governed by the specific issues involved and the circumstance surrounding it.

If first impressions are important, the first word is even more so. That is the view of *Hershel Shanks*, in his paper, "How The Bible Begins," in which he differs with the scholars who worked on the recent Jewish Publication Society translation of the book of Genesis. As an informed laymen, Mr. Shanks brings interesting and valid reasoning, as well as information, to his argument about the proper rendition of the word, *bereshit*.

The complex and manifold laws on mourning in the Jewish tradition, which represent an accumulation of many generations, are frequently explained in anthropological terms as constituting a body of taboos. *Rabbi Emanuel Feldman* does not deny the existence of such parallels in other cultures. He maintains, however, that, basically, the laws of mourning in the Halakhah expressed the concept of "death as estrangement" in his very stimulating paper of the same name.

One of the aspects of contemporary Jewish life to which Jews are becoming increasingly sensitive is the assimilation of Jewish norms of practice and thinking to Christian models. In his paper, "Is the Synagogue Becoming a Church—The Rabbi a Priest?," *Rabbi Henry Siegman* raises the question whether the structure of our inter-faith activities on the American scene is not itself symptomatic of this type of assimilation. He suggests that the agencies operating in this field ought to be scrutinized from the standpoint of the authentic Jewish tradition.

The tremendous concern with the Bible in religious circles has tended to obscure, both for them and for others, the rich deposit of hu-

manistic values to be found in the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures. As the great Biblical exegete, Arnold B. Ehrlich, who lived and worked in America, wrote, "The Hebrew Bible, in contradistinction to the New Testament, is not a collection of religious tracts but a national literature upon a religious foundation." The humane ethical emphasis in this tradition and literature and examined by *Professor Shemaryahu Talmon* in his paper, "The Bible in Contemporary Israeli Humanism."

It has long been recognized that the Jewish ethos was fashioned by centuries of exposure to the Bible and Rabbinic literature, through the characters they portray and the ideals they extol. In his paper, *Dr. Bernard Mandelbaum* traces the impact of the Aggadah, the moral and religious material imbedded in the Talmud and the Midrash, upon the building of Jewish character. Particularly noteworthy is his highlighting the importance of the traditional practice of *shimmush talmidei hakhamim*, the custom of the disciple serving his master and, in the process, learning to imitate his ways of thought and behavior. In these days of "learning machines" and increasing impersonalization, the old, naïve virtue is worth pondering and recapturing.

Each generation must scrutinize its past anew, reexamining the events of history and reevaluating the figures that have shaped its life and thought. This ongoing enterprise is advanced in the papers we have grouped under the rubric "Four Figures Revisited." The vast dissimilarities among Samuel Hirsch, Martin Buber, M. Y. Berdichevsky and Ernst Bloch are striking. What unites them is an over-riding moral concern—the quest for the good life for Israel and mankind.

When German Jewry entered into Western Society in the first half of the 19th century, it experienced a remarkable efflorescence of spirit. The development of *Jüdische Wissenschaft*, the scientific study of Jewish history and literature, was one of its most significant achievements, from which all modern Jewish scholarship takes its point of departure. Less influential but scarcely less significant was the emergence of a group of Jewish religious thinkers who produced a creditable body of theological literature, much of which is undeservedly forgotten.

One of the most distinguished members of this group was Samuel Hirsch, who sought to bring his religious outlook into harmony with the philosophy of Hegel which was dominant at the time. In his paper, "Samuel Hirsch's Absolute Religiosity," *Dr. Gerson Greenberg* assays Hirsch's contribution to the philosophy of history, which has been a Jewish preoccupation ever since the days of the Biblical Prophets.

Spiritual influences often transcend time and space. In his thoughtful paper, "Martin Buber and Taoism," *James A. Moran* points up some interesting affinities between the Jewish thinker in the West and Oriental religious philosophy.

The original and iconoclastic Hebrew writer, Mikhah Yosef Berdichevsky, is the subject of a paper by *Rabbi Samuel Z. Fishman*. He treats an extremely important aspect of his thought in his paper, "M. Y. Berdichevsky On the Meaning of History."

Professor Harry Slochower brings to our readers an appreciation of the philosopher, Ernst Bloch. The Jewish affinities of Bloch's thought are explored in Professor Slochower's thoughtful paper, "Introducing: Ernst Bloch." Students of the mathematical laws of probability may wish to ponder the existence of two distinguished figures bearing the not very common name of Ernst Bloch—one, an illustrious composer, the other, a distinguished philosopher.

R.G.

JUDAISM AND LIBERALISM— MARRIAGE, SEPARATION OR DIVORCE

By Way of Introduction

ROBERT GORDIS

IT IS NOW NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS SINCE the process of Jewish Emancipation began in Western Central Europe. As a result of this complex and uneven development, Western Jews were granted the rights of citizenship, which included relative political equality, substantial economic opportunities and the privilege of participating in the cultural life of their native or adopted land. Throughout this century and a half and more, modern Jewry in Europe and America has generally occupied a position left-of-center in the political spectrum. It was felt to be axiomatic that the conservative parties and reactionary forces in politics were basically hostile to Jewish rights and aspirations. With few exceptions, Jews were associated either with liberal politics or with Labor and Social Democratic parties, while some adopted the more leftist position of Communist groups, long before the rise of the Soviet regime.

Now, as we approach the two hundredth anniversary of Jewish Emancipation in a drastically changed world, this almost instinctive affinity of Jews for political and economic liberalism and radicalism is being challenged on many grounds. This issue, I believe, is of fundamental importance, both for the future of the Jewish community and the integrity of the Jewish tradition. As Editor of JUDAISM I, therefore, addressed a letter to a group of Jewish scholars, theologians, rabbis and public figures, asking them to express their views with regard to the question, "Judaism and Liberalism—Marriage, Separation, or Divorce?" The spirit in which this symposium was planned and its frame of reference are clear from the following salient portions of the letter of invitation:

We are asking a broad spectrum of representative thinkers and leaders to react to the question of whether the "traditional" alliance between American Jewry and the left-of-center movements in America—an alliance which has been buttressed by a "progressive" interpretation of the Jewish tradition—has not reached the end of the line.

There is the evidence of indifference, if not hostility, of many circles in liberal Protestant Christianity toward the State of Israel. There is the growth of anti-Semitism in articulate segments of the Black community and other minority groups. There is the pro-Arab, anti-Israel position of Jewish radicals, both on the college campuses and elsewhere. Moreover, there is always room and need to evaluate anew the character and direction of the Jewish tradition.

I am not suggesting that these phenomena justify a change of emphasis and direction for the Jewish community. I am merely raising the question whether they do, or should the traditional Jewish dedication to liberal and progressive ideals be maintained, both on theoretic, as well as on pragmatic grounds?

Dr. Steven S. Schwarzschild, Professor of Judaic Studies at George Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and formerly Editor of JUDAISM, takes his point of departure from this letter of invitation. From the title of the symposium and the thumb-nail description of the conditions that led to its creation he presumes, quite illegitimately be it said, a conservative bias on my part. Nonetheless, he has not permitted his pique to interfere with the presentation of his point of view. Dr. Schwarzschild makes a passionate plea for militant Jewish radicalism in the social and political spheres, coupled with religious orthodoxy.

Dr. Schwarzschild vehemently opposes liberalism in the name of the radicalism that he favors. *Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein*, Professor of Religion at The Florida State University, opposes the liberal position with equal vigor, but does so in the name of the middle-class interests of American Jewry. He feels that upper-class "leaders" of the Establishment have ill served the cause of their fellow-Jews of lower social and economic levels.

Rabbi Alan W. Miller, Rabbi of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, and a leading exponent of Reconstructionism, recognizes the signs of a drift to political conservatism in the Jewish community and analyzes the reasons that have led to this development. Nevertheless, he feels strongly that the moral imperatives of Judaism and the nature of Jewish destiny both require that Jews support liberalism in the long and difficult quest for a just society.

Dr. Seymour Siegel, Professor of Theology at the Jewish Theological Seminary, adopts a dramatically opposed position. He welcomes the signs of a growing conservatism in some Jewish circles and regards it as being in conformity with the teaching of Jewish tradition. He sets forth ten principles of liberalism which he finds inadequate, untrue, and inimical to Jewish welfare and to society as a whole.

In sharp disagreement with several of the symposiasts who approach the issue in terms of Jewish self-interest. *Dr. Arthur J. Lelyveld*, in his paper, "In Defense of Liberalism," argues strongly in favor of the classic concept of liberalism as a dedication to freedom and justice. He maintains that for Jews to surrender their attachment to these goals is in total violation of the Jewish tradition and a peril to Jewish survival.

Abraham D. Beame, Comptroller of the City of New York, brings his long political activity and far-flung administrative experience to bear upon the question under discussion. He approaches the issue in pragmatic terms and points out that the Jewish community has tended

to oscillate between the two poles of liberalism and conservatism. The reason lies in the fact that Jews have traditionally identified themselves with the liberal concern for the person and with the conservative respect for law and community. He underscores his conviction that, in spite of the disappointments and frustrations of the recent past, it would be a mistake for Jews to surrender their left-of-center orientation.

Dr. Jacob Neusner, Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, points to the historical record in order to demonstrate that Judaism cannot be neatly pigeon-holed as either "liberal" or "conservative." He notes the great difficulties involved in extrapolating from classical Jewish tradition to contemporary problems, and distinguishes between Judaism and Jews in this connection. Modern Jews have traditionally been allied with the left but have suffered major disappointments in critical junctures like the Nazi Holocaust or the crisis confronting the State of Israel. He believes, therefore, that, at least for the present, a selective approach would better serve the interests of the American Jewish community and the State of Israel.

Dr. Judd L. Teller, the well-known sociologist and political analyst, currently serving as Research Consultant for the Synagogue Council of America, points out that the ambiguities and confusions confronting the Jewish community as it seeks to plot its course with regard to liberalism and conservatism, are not of recent vintage. He offers an historical survey of the all-too-frequent confluence of radicalism and Jewbaiting in the past. He urges no permanent "marriage" with either camp but, rather, a careful discrimination on each issue as to where Jewish interests would best be served.

Deeply concerned as I am with this issue, I have resisted the temptation to register my own views or even to note my dissent from statements of both fact and of opinion which I feel to be mistaken in these papers. It should not be necessary to point out that each contributor is responsible for his own views and his manner of stating them.

The symposium is published as a contribution to an enlightened discussion of this crucial issue of our times. The conclusion that emerges from all these thoughtful and stimulating presentations is that no simple formula will meet the complex and far-reaching issues involved. The fluid, ever-changing situation calls upon all the energies and intellectual resources of the Jewish community. If we are to survive in the present age of permanent crisis we shall need the time-honored virtues of love of humanity and of *sekhel*.

The Radical Imperatives of Judaism

STEVEN S. SCHWARZSCHILD

THAT WORLD-JEWRY HAS ENTERED INTO AN historical period of increasing socio-political conservatism can scarcely be doubted. It is, furthermore, not only a relative conservatism, compared to earlier Jewish liberalism, while still significantly to the Left of general, non-Jewish conservatism, but it increasingly coincides and allies itself with the conventional forces of established conservatism.

The evidence of this claim is so overwhelming that it is difficult to organize it handily. One could point, symbolically, to the fact that Richard Nixon's buddy Max Fischer is at present and not so coincidentally president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, the most over-arching American-Jewish organization. One could point to the self-alienation of American Jewry from the racial struggle in this country before, by, and after Albert Shanker's fight against Black teaching in the N.Y. school-system. American Jewry withdrew from its earlier vanguard opposition to the Vietnam war, and Israel increasingly endorsed that war through its press and in the government, subsequent to President Johnson's threat to abandon Israel if Jews caused him too much trouble on this score. The control of Jewish organizations, from local congregations and federations to national and international Jewish bodies, by a self-perpetuating and self-fortifying plutocracy produces several conspicuous results: it makes American Jewry an almost entirely undemocratic community; it repels and expels most significant elements intellectually, ethically, and politically liberal within that community; it brings the *de facto* policies of that community increasingly in line with the "enlightened self-interest" of the dominant socio-economic powers;¹ and it creates an American Judaism which Israelis rightly know to be abysmally inauthentic and an Israeli Judaism which American Jews rightly sense to be wildly distorted and debased. The heavy wet blanket of conformism is being lowered over dissenters in Israel and here: Uri Avneri and Uri Davis, for example, are hounded by A.D.L. and B'nai B'rith Hillel memos—J.D.L.ites are handed over to the F.B.I. by the A.D.L.—men like Noam Chomsky and Erich Fromm are virtually excommunicated, etc.

Perhaps the simplest way of making the point is to analyze the

1. A memorable example of this was the report of the A.D.L., helping out the A.M.A., which imputed antisemitism to medical groups concerned with social problems.

STEVEN S. SCHWARZSCHILD is professor of Judaic studies and philosophy at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., and former editor of JUDAISM.

explicit premises of the present symposium. Its organizer states: "There is evidence of indifference, if not hostility, of many circles in liberal Protestant Christianity." Where is that evidence? The harangues of the American Jewish Congress at the Quaker proposal for the Near East are disingenuous, detrimental to the marginal possibilities for reconciliation and peace, and injurious to the future and the value of the Jewish people. The analysis published in *Midstream* of the articles about the Near East in *Christianity and Crisis*, although more decent in tone, was in turn a sustained effort at incomprehension of the legitimate moral and political problems of proven friends of Jewry. Anyway, how come there is no word here about the (conservative) Roman church? Has the Vatican recognized Israel or changed its tune about Jerusalem? But then, of course, there is the *meshummad* and proselytizer Msgr. Oesterreicher who endears himself to official Jewry by endorsing its political positions. The frame of reference of the symposium continues: "There is the growth of anti-Semitism in articulate segments of the Black community and other minority groups." Where is it? Has it, in any case, never been there before? Whatever there is, has it not at least in part been caused by Jewish mistakes in the past and by conscious Jewish strategies in the present? For example, there were meetings in N.Y. in which Israeli consular officials, interested in the effects on *aliyah*, and Jewish educators, interested in the effects on enrollment in Jewish schools, conferred collectively with Mr. Shanker and prominent Jewish theoreticians of political conservatism about the teachers' strike. And Jews suddenly exercise themselves about "neighborhood schools," busing, and the economics of grandfather-stores when the civil rights movement comes to suburbia and 125th street.² In any event, how come all these questions are asked at precisely this time when to assume such premises clearly serves a self-fulfilling conservative political purpose? To resume the quotation: "There is the pro-Arab, anti-Israel position of Jewish radicals, both on the college campuses and elsewhere." In the first place, there is not one "position"—there are many dozens. In the second place, it is the anti-Arab position that is the anti-Israel position, for it endangers the historical security of the Jewish people in the Holy Land and damages

2. We are here, as elsewhere, dealing with an international Jewish phenomenon. The present head of the British Jewish Board of Deputies is the M.P. Michael Fidler who supports the Tory racist immigration bill. The chief-rabbi of the Union of South Africa expressed the true attitude of his official establishment when, according to the *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review* of July 23, 1971, he justified Jewish "neutrality" toward apartheid with the claim that "whereas the Christian churches embraced people of all colours, this was not the case (sic) with the Jewish community." And the front-page editorial article in the official weekly of West-German Jewry, *Allgemeine Unabh ngige Juedische Zeitung*, of July 30, 1971, declares in italics that "at least at this time the radical Left must be regarded as more dangerous, because of its heightened efforts, than its friendly enemies of the Right." Thus it aligns itself with the German-nationalist journalistic empire of Axel Springer, who himself boasts of being a mouthpiece of the official Israeli line.

the ethical values of Jewish culture. Thirdly, "radicals on the campuses and elsewhere" is a typical slogan out of the Agnew armory—used for precisely the same purposes. In sum, just about all the historical and ideological friends of the Jewish people have by now been proscribed—progressives, the disinherited, and the intellectuals. Only conservatives and reactionaries are left over, —and about their traditional and current enmity to Jews and their goals not a word is said.

What has brought about this state of mind and of affairs? One over-all cause can easily be determined: until very recently Jews wanted things that they did not have and had, therefore, to try to wrest from the powers that be—emancipation, social and political security, and national existence; now we have by and large attained to these desiderata in the Western world and Israel, and we want to protect and keep them. "Protect and keep" are the watchwords of the *status quo*. The year 1967 coagulated various developments leading up to this point, and that year can, therefore, symbolize the real beginning of this new historical period in Jewish history. Barring catastrophic changes, it is a period that can be expected to last a long time.³

The question then arises as to how to deal with this development. In realistic terms the only way that the basic Jewish conservative posture could be expected to be fundamentally overturned is to remove its causes—*i.e.* if the prevailing forces in the world would, once more, deprive Jewry of its new-found securities. This, however, would truly be a Jewish catastrophe: either national Jewish existence or the socio-economic status that the Jews have achieved in Western countries would be destroyed, or both. Unless one is opposed to the existence or welfare of Jews one cannot wish for this. The alternative is, of course, to try to alter fundamentally yet evolutionarily the nature and direction not only of world-Jewry but also of America, with which it is substantially identified; but, while one should make all possible efforts toward this end, success of such efforts is most unlikely. Finally, in terms of the Jewish "superstructure" one could hope that the essential ethical and social values em-

3. Regardless of how much evidence might be adduced in this, necessarily abbreviated, "position paper," it will still be accused of "rhetoric"—on the principle that what I say is, by definition, rational and what my controversialist says is, therefore, rhetoric. Just the same, one more, particularly telling, proof for the thesis so far stated shall be mentioned—the eye-opening article "Ramah and its Critics" in *Conservative Judaism* XXV/4, Summer 1971. It comes out of "the heart of the heart of the (Jewish) country"—Conservative Judaism, which is pretty much the socio-religious "center" of American Jewry, and its most "beloved darling child," its youth-camps. It tells its story with rather admirable frankness, bringing together almost all of the factors here mentioned—how 1967 crystallized an on-going backlash at Jewish participation in the Vietnam, racial, social, and intellectual struggles in contemporary society. One sentence is so paradigmatic that it is positively delicious: the closed alternative is presented whether "to teach Judaism and Jewish loyalty solely, or to relate Judaism to broad moral and ethical problems." (p. 11) Presumably "broad moral problems" are outside of Judaism and can, therefore, at best, be "related" to it!

bodied in classical Jewish culture will overcome the dynamic of the present Jewish historical conjunction. The late Prof. H. Slonimsky expressed this hope on his eightieth birthday: "The new incredible problem . . . is how to be well-to-do economically and financially and still retain that . . . sensitiveness . . . which usually go(es) with unconcern for this world's worldly goods. . . . We Jews must try to be the vanguard in that new schooling." But this is, of course, a futile, though valiant, hope. In the first place, as we have seen earlier, contemporary Jewish religion and culture are themselves profoundly and almost hopelessly torn away from their Biblical, Rabbinic, and historic value-roots. And, in general, needs speak louder than ideals. Slonimsky sensed this, and, despite his desperate optimism, exclaimed: "Can it be done? Can it be done?" It cannot—at least not by the bulk of the Jewish, or any other, people.

As with any historical condition that cannot be rescinded or fundamentally altered, there is, then, only one alternative: like the Abbé Sieyès during the French Revolution, one has to try to survive it and to influence it to move in the direction and with the speed that one would like to see it take. Jewry as a whole joined the bourgeoisie and the class of sovereign nations very late in the game, and this socio-economic stage through which the whole world (including the communist blocs and the so-called "third world") is going together with Jewry will presumably metamorphize before too long—who knows into what and when? All we do know is that the change will be produced by a combination of the forces at work within the established societies, between the various societies, and by the conscious exertions of smaller or larger groups of people who dis-identify themselves with these societies. Clearly organized Jewry as such cannot be expected to be one of these groups, for fundamental change is precisely what a conservative community does not want.

On the other hand, there are some Jews who have not been incorporated in established, organized Jewry, even as in Gentile society there are potent forces for change. They are a motley crowd: non-bourgeois Jewry in Israel, America, and other places, the poor, the old and the young, political, religious, intellectual, and artistic dissenters, etc. Those among them that are motivated by immediate economic concerns, as among the sympathizers of the J.D.L., the Jewish lower middle-class vote that has swung behind reactionary, racist mayoralty candidates in America's large cities, and some elements among the Israeli poor, are susceptible to certain chauvinistic, "Lumpenproletariat" ultra-Rightist temptations. They can, however, also overlap with and tend in a Leftward direction. The most interesting dissenters from the Jewish establishment are those characterized by their religious Orthodoxy and the political radicals, *i.e.* everything ranging from the Satmerer Rebbe to Arthur Waskow and the Washington, D.C., "Ferbrennen," and much in-between. (The spectrum of "Zionist" and "Jewish radicals" presents a very ambiguous

scene.) These obviously are not and do not want to be integrated into the over-all thrust of contemporary Jewish history. Unless they are blindly fanatical and utopian they will realize that they cannot hope to determine the direction of official Jewry now or in the immediate future. They can—like the “Frankfurt school” of “critical Marxists”—hope to survive in an uncongenial environment and to preserve and enhance their understanding of the ultimate, authentic import of the Jewish people for a more opportune historical time. They can and must study the implications and demands of authentic, classical Jewish culture. They will order their own lives increasingly in keeping with that culture and tell the truth as they see it about Judaism, the world, and themselves—with a due sense of self-preservation and in the vestigial hope of getting their point across here or there. They may even fight when and where it is possible to fight. In short, they will constitute an interim, independent, discrete sort of “parallel Judaism.”

If official Jewry has any spark of authenticity left, more likely—if it has retained a vestige of a long-range will to survive, it will do what bourgeois society at its best has known how to do: learn to live with, adjust to, and possibly even positively aid the development of its own internal antagonists. The present conjunction of perceived Jewish self-interest and conservatism will not last forever. It is, in any case, based on a serious misunderstanding of modern history. Neo-conservative Jewish thinkers, like J. Talmon, Leo Strauss, H. Arendt, etc., and their outlets in the journals of the ex-Left, argue that anti-bourgeois revolutions like Nazism and Stalinism caused Jewry infinitely more harm than the admittedly inadequate liberal societies against which they rebelled. The point is, however, that these were counter-revolutions which gave expression to, tried to preserve and to re-entrench the established system in the face of developments that promised to transcend it. Such counter-revolutions are always again possible and even likely. Conservatism is, therefore, the problem, not the solution. As the Right increasingly comes to power it may at first like Jews, but Jews had better beware: when the Right has achieved full power Jewry will be cut off from the land of the living—as it has been in such situations again and again. If, in the meantime, Judaism and a conservative social posture have been too closely identified with one another, it will have been made impossible for any potential members and adherents to salvage Judaism for themselves and others out of the rubble of the new barbarism. The fate of the few euphoric German-nationalist Jews like Hans-Joachim Schoeps (who is still advocating the restoration of the Prussian monarchy but who is at this time getting a new hearing, at least as a scholar, in neo-conservative journals in his country), and, indeed, the fate of all the short-lived episodes of comparative Jewish ease in history, ought to be an ineluctable

warning. The truth of the matter is that until Messiah has come Jews will always have to be radically dissatisfied.

The beginnings of the parallel Judaism of which we speak can even now be discerned in and around the campuses, in and around communes and *havurot*, and among literally thousands of small cells of practicing Jews who show up on no Jewish organizational membership lists whatsoever. Its character can conveniently be defined by taking the formulation of the present symposium quite literally and analyzing it for its implications. Karl Barth taught the church, especially in face of German nationalism, that Christianity could have only one commitment, which is total and can brook no coalition with any additional power. If this be true of Christianity, how much more true must it be of Judaism! The “associationism” (*shittuf*) which the accepted Jewish view concedes as legitimate to Christianity is strictly forbidden to us. We have to be exclusively loyal to “the jealous God” of monotheism Who permits none beside—by the side of—Him. This is one chief reason for speaking of God as holy—which is to say, among other things, beyond sex and, therefore, not such as to marry, separate, or divorce.

No doubt Jews have often in the past made pacts with other forces, and they will no doubt make them again. But Jeremiah and Hosea, and those who have tried to learn from them, have always seen through such coalitionism: the Assyrian liberals as well as the Egyptian conservatives have made “marriages of convenience;” their concubines seduce them away from Israel’s only true love; and they will abandon Israel when this suits their purposes. Authentic Jews have a radical, which is to say an infinite and exclusive commitment to the God and Torah of Israel; from these, and from these alone, do they draw their guidance and strength. This is not to say, of course, that they cannot cooperate with non-Jews or non-Jewish causes when these happen to coincide with Jewish imperatives. But we neither marry nor divorce them. We just go our own way (*derekh hahalakhah*)—we welcome anyone who accompanies us, for whatever reason and however far or short—but when their paths diverge from ours we continue to follow ours undismayed. Political liberals have also typically “liberal” ideas about marriage: you marry somewhat nonchalantly, and you divorce the same way. Radicals commit themselves radically: they can have only one love—at this they work all their lives—and without it they die. (How phony much of the current self-proclaimed “radical” scene is can be measured by its deviations from this norm.) Cutting through all these metaphors: conservatism, like traditional liberalism, is a commitment to the world as it is or as, at best, it is “essentially” capable of becoming; radicalism is a commitment to God and a world such as He, ideally, “unnaturally,” *i.e.* metaphysically, wants it to be. If “the Torah of life and of the love of grace, of righteousness, blessing, compassion, of life and peace”—if, in another vocabulary, radical social democracy,

real “liberty, equality, and fraternity,” etc.,—if these are the command of God rather than merely a temporary, self-serving political tactic in a particular conjunction of Jewish and world history, then we will pursue them in congenial and uncongenial times, whether other Jews or non-Jews like it or no. Presumably we were committed to the radical abolition of war, racism, poverty, and inhumanity in general, because these contradict the letter and the spirit of the Torah, not essentially because of some transitory coincidence of self-interest between ourselves and other groupings committed to these goals. It follows then that, whatever such other groupings may or may not do to their goals or to themselves, our original commitment stands. It is even possible, though at this time far from an established fact, that such groupings may turn against us. In that case we would have to say, in the words of Rabbi Levi Yizhak of Berditchev: Oh God, if You won’t redeem us, at least redeem the *goyim*! Or in the words of the Kotzker Rebbe: We will remain Jews regardless of how hard You, oh God, try to dissuade us.

Liberalism and the Jewish Interests

RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN

A REAPPRAISAL OF POLITICAL COMMITMENTS BY

all Americans, but especially by Jews, is presently indispensable. This will probably be difficult for Jews who often lack both experience and sagacity in dealing with political realities. One example of this lack of political wisdom was the almost universal tendency of American Jews to idolize Franklin D. Roosevelt at a time when he had deliberately turned his back on Europe's condemned Jews and was seeking to sabotage any possibility of establishing a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Unfortunately, the failure of the majority of American Jews correctly to perceive Roosevelt's political intentions is but one of a very long list of often disastrous misperceptions in politics.

In 1971, terms such as "left," "right," "liberal," and "conservative" seem far less useful than they were a decade ago, before ethnic politics had become so central to American life. Today, one can be in favor of "liberal" economic measures yet be extremely wary in the emotion-laden area of ethnic politics. I no longer know what it means to be "liberal" or "conservative." Is Nixon "liberal" or "conservative" in promulgating the most thoroughly controlled economy Americans have ever known in peacetime? Is he "liberal" or "conservative" in foreign affairs? How shall Jews evaluate the fact that, owing less to Jewish support than any of his recent predecessors, Nixon has done more to aid Israel?

When one asks whether the "traditional alliance" of Judaism and the Left will hold, one asks the wrong question. There never was such an alliance on either side. Furthermore, the question glosses over the more fundamental issue of the bitter class conflict that lurks beneath the facade of Jewish communal unity. Upper-class Jews, middle-class Jews, professionals and intellectuals, cannot share common political goals because they do not share common life-styles or common political and social concerns. To the extent that the *organized* Jewish community represents the interests and aspirations of any group, that group consists of those upper-class Jews "on the periphery" who are apparently more interested in maintaining their position of relative privilege *vis à vis* the WASP élite than in defending the interests of their middle-class co-religionists.

By virtue of their social and financial power, upper-class Jews domi-

RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN is professor of religion at The Florida State University, Tallahassee.

nate the only Jewish organizations with any degree of real power, the charitable and welfare Federations. Is it not obvious that the leaders of the Federations have consistently utilized their position to foster their own interests and betray those of middle-class Jews from the inception of mass Eastern European immigration to the United States to the present? Was this betrayal not clearly in evidence in the 1960's? The riots which followed the assassination of Martin Luther King were, in reality, a gigantic assault on marginal Jewish enterprise in the Black ghettos. As one Black leader put it in conversation, Jewish merchants were the "scavengers" of American capitalism. They were also the buffers between the Blacks and those who, in fact, had reduced them to the status of an urban underclass. When Black rage finally found its target, it was, predictably, the vulnerable Jewish middle man rather than the dominant WASP power structure. The response of the Federations was to utilize funds collected within the Jewish community for projects more likely to benefit Blacks than Jews. While the Federations were pouring vast quantities of scarce resources into such enterprises they did little or nothing to respond to the fact that many Jewish businessmen had been dealt a devastating social and economic blow amidst widespread public indifference. The need to assist and retrain these men and women was almost entirely ignored. Very frequently, the treatment they received from communal "leaders" and their hirelings bordered on contempt. One does not have to hold any special brief for the entrepreneurs to understand that they had been captive to overwhelming social forces which were destined sooner or later to undo them. Had there really been a Jewish community in fact, rather than merely in name, one might have expected some of its "community relations" experts to have utilized their expertise to probe, if not to solve, the problems which confronted the victims of the riots. Instead, the experts, almost to a man, refused to acknowledge that a distinctively Jewish problem of considerable urgency existed.

This is not the occasion to review the New York teachers' strike. However, one notes that in that prolonged struggle the support of upper-class Jews was more likely to be given to the Blacks than to the middle-class Jewish teachers. Recently, Pittsburgh's prestigious Duquesne Club apparently decided to admit five or six Jews a year into its previously all-Christian membership. Some of the most important Jewish community-relations organizations had worked long and hard to bring about the change in policy. Nevertheless, one must ask whether their "success" does not actually heighten the likelihood that the "leaders" of the Jewish "community" will betray their co-religionists when upper and middle-class interests conflict. Can anyone expect the *nouveaux* members of the Duquesne Club to antagonize those who have *let them in* for the sake

of less powerful Jews? On the contrary, is it not more reasonable to expect that they will utilize their very considerable power within the Jewish "community" to keep the middle-class in line? Incidentally, one is also compelled to ask whether any man of integrity could identify with an *organized* community led by parvenus and pariahs with pretensions to upper-class status, who are all too ready to betray their own kinsmen?

The real question facing the Jewish "community" is not whether the alliance with the Left will hold, but whether there is any way in which the "community's" organizational structure can be sensitive to, and represent, the real political needs of the middle-class majority. Personally, I cannot entirely respond to, or sympathize with, the aspirations of the majority. Nevertheless, I do not see how a group worthy of any degree of respect can long tolerate a leadership which has, in the past, and is likely, in the future, to betray the majority's interests.

What are the political interests of middle-class American Jews at the present time? Very briefly, their interests are not very different from those of other middle class ethnics. In a time of diminishing affluence, the ethnics are likely to find that the *élite* will be tempted to play them off against the underclass. Were I a disadvantaged Black, I would not be likely to worry about the cost to lower middle-class ethnics of my political and economic gains, especially where Jews are involved. As a result, the middle-class ethnics find themselves caught on the horns of a dilemma. They are really not very comfortable in the Republican party. Historically, the Republican party has been the party of the countryside and the Northern Protestant majority. The Democratic party has been the great coalition of the ethnic minorities, including the Southern Protestants who became an ethnic minority by losing the Civil War. That uneasy coalition proved viable until the rise of Black political self-consciousness. In view of the conflicting interests which divide Blacks from other groups within the Democratic coalition, it is impossible to predict whether the coalition will hold. Black gains must inevitably be at the cost of lower middle-class losses. In addition, the third-world ideology of many Black leaders is not only antagonistic to Israel but it is an irritant to the ethnics, many of whom have very good reasons for bitter hostility to the Soviet empire. Hopefully, some way will be found to maintain the coalition. Whatever conflicts separate the Blacks from the other groups within the Democratic party, they are, in reality, less serious than the conflicts between all of these groups and the WASP managerial and corporate *élite*. However, should the Democratic party become dominated by a Black-radical-White-upper class coalition (both WASP and Jewish) led by someone like John Lindsay, a monumental restructuring of party allegiance is likely to take place.

The Democratic party might easily retain the allegiance of upper-class Jews; it could hardly be expected to retain the loyalty of the ethnics or politically sophisticated middle-class Jews. Many people who never expected to do so might then find themselves joining the Republican party, or, at least, supporting its presidential candidate.

Liberalism is Indispensable

ALAN W. MILLER

THE VOTES ARE NOT YET ALL IN AND, INDEED, A comprehensive tally may never be possible, but the conservative trend in the American Jewish community has been evident since 1967, if not before. Eugene Borowitz sums it up with an elegance which masks some of the underlying crudity: "This is a moment of resurgent Jewish particularism. Perhaps the numbers involved are small. Nonetheless I think a substantial shift of mood with regard to the human situation and thus with regard to Israel's place in history, is sweeping over much of free Jewry."¹

An avowed journal of conservative thought lists the following, among others, as contributing editors: Professors Seymour Siegel, Will Herberg, Jacob Neusner, Jakob Petuchowski. Typical of recent editorial comments in that journal are the following. . . . On the Pentagon Papers: "We are not in a position to determine whether or not the publication of some or all of the documents does actually do injury to the national interests of our country. However, given a choice between the government's assurance that it does and that of the 'Times' that it does not, one could scarcely help giving the government the benefit of the doubt. . . ." And on the FBI: "It is hardly news that many liberals confronted by a violation of law will react against the law enforcer rather than the law breaker."²

The Jewish Defense League syndrome is another straw in the wind. Exact statistics are not available, but rarely has any movement in recent decades touched so deep a nerve in the heart of grass roots Jewry and elicited such support. It has drawn a sharp distinction between what may loosely be called *am'kha*, the lower middle and blue collared working class Jews, the ones in New York City, for example, both professionally and geographically in close propinquity to the embattled frontiers of urban life, and the "upper" classes for whom civil rights may be a calling but rarely a sacrifice.

Other evidence is more elusive yet equally relevant. Jewish support for conservative candidates in the 1970 elections; the falling off from previous levels of fiscal and other support by Jews for civil rights programs; the *volte face* in places least expected on the classical Jewish at-

1. Eugene Borowitz, "The Dialectic of Jewish Particularity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Summer 1971, p. 570.

2. *Ideas*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1971), pp. 2, 3.

ALAN W. MILLER is the Rabbi of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism in New York.

titude to the issue of aid to parochial schools; the unequivocal, unmistakable, even if hotly denied swing to the right by certain leading Jewish "intellectual" journals.

What are the reasons for the trend? The conspicuous lack of support by the bulk of Christendom during the Six Day War was undoubtedly one of the most potent factors in the reappraisal of Jewish priorities. The subsequent Chicago New Left Convention, Third World pro-Arab-anti-Israel-ism and the New York school strike with its fall-out of Black anti-Semitism, real or imagined, also profoundly affected Jewish attitudes. The argument on one level runs thus: "We Jews have been in the vanguard of every liberal movement in which we were permitted to play a role ever since we were emancipated. In fact, millions of us literally sacrificed our Jewish identities on the altar of utopian-messianic-universalism. Unfortunately, political realities (the Holocaust, 1967, etc.) are such that we now see that the Gentile has no respect for the Jew without power. The Emancipation, with its promise, has proved to be a will-o'-the-wisp. We will now look to ourselves in Israel and in America. Henceforth, the criterion for our efforts will be: is it good for the Jews?" The local argument was put a little more bluntly, off the record, by a rabbi at a recent national convention of a large rabbinical association, where the issue of parochiaid was being discussed: "We helped the Blacks and then they turned on us. Now let them look after themselves."

There is a deep-seated fear in many American Jews today, all the more insidious because rarely honestly articulated in public. In our public protestations we are still ethical, compassionate and forbearing, *rahmanim bnei rahmanim*. In private, the tragedies of the twentieth century have bred an increasingly callous insensitivity to human needs other than our own. The fear is genuine and understandable. The question is whether conservatism is the best way to cope with it. For, ultimately, conservatism at the present point in American history means a price to be paid by those least able to afford it.

Some facets of the growing divorce between Judaism and liberalism deserve comment. Jewish day schools predate the current trend to conservatism. But the unseemly rush to set up Jewish day schools in the aftermath of the New York school strike speaks of something else. It calls to mind the comment made about the Puritans and bear baiting. They opposed it, not so much because it hurt the bear as that it gave pleasure to the spectators. The phenomenal increase, in the last decade, of Jewish day schools, manifests less of a desire to be authentic Jews than to avoid sitting with Black and Puerto Rican children in classrooms. One trembles at the thought of the efficacy of Torah taught under such distinguished ethical auspices. The parents may delude themselves, but never the children. Rabbi Akiba, who wrote, "Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God," would be impressed. Yet there is con-

siderable evidence that underprivileged children in the same classrooms as the privileged gain infinitely more than the others lose.³

Black anti-Semitism has been exaggerated and consistently overplayed. Of course some Blacks hate Jews. Many people do. It is a Christian, rather than a specifically Black, problem. To single out the Blacks has fostered the fear. That, in itself, is a form of racism. To withdraw from liberal causes whose chief beneficiaries are the underprivileged (I wonder why so many of them are Black and Puerto Rican. Could it be that the Kerner Commission was correct in assessing America as a racist country? And are some Jews racist?) is made so much easier if we have cause. "They hate us." The hatred may be real. Its use as a reason for withdrawal is invidious. Social issues must be tackled at the root causes, not studiously avoided at the symptom level.

It would appear, as one surveys the last decade of American Jewish life, that the American Jew is not as virtuous as his self-image is so often advertised to be. He found it so much easier to help the Black as subservient rather than as peer. (How insulting. They really think they are as good as us.) Granted that the State of Israel has no alternative in the face of Arab intransigence other than to adopt a hard line, where does the American Jew stand? If he really feels that the Jew is on his own, what better plan of action than to emigrate to Israel and physically defend a majority Jewish State against its manifest enemies with all the paraphernalia of modern warfare at his disposal. Remaining behind in America, as of free choice, he has no alternative but to endeavor to live authentically in terms of both of the civilizations in which he finds himself and from which he derives benefits. The slums of New York and Chicago are his problem, as much as the slums of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Perhaps more so. To remain in America and ally with any and every kind of group and politician simply in terms of Jewish or Israeli self interest will ultimately prove to be self defeating. Meir Kahane joins hands with the Mafia—if it is good for the Jews. Good for what? To such extremes can a perverted power ethic lead the American Jews. The meaning of Kahane's popular success is ignored at our peril. The syndrome is not the exclusive property of our lunatic fringe.

We Jews will not voluntarily return to the passivity and helplessness of pre-modern Jewish life. But there is a world of difference between a supine, ghettoized indifference to sheer, physical survival and a machiavellian cynicism antithetic to Jewish values which is being currently cultivated in certain circles. Yohanan ben Nuri, who lived at the time of the Hadrianic persecutions, wrote the famous *uvekhen ten paḥdekha* prayers of the New Year and Atonement liturgy. To be a Palestinian Jew under Hadrian was infinitely worse than being a Russian Jew under Brezhnev. It was, occasionally, as bad as being in Auschwitz (Akiba). Yet the first

3. Coleman Report.

and largest *uvekhen* is a prayer for universalism. Jewish concern for Soviet Jewry would ring that much more authentically Jewish if we acknowledged that other culturally advanced ethnic groups also suffer under Soviet oppression.⁴ "Let my people go" was a beautiful slogan—in the thirteenth pre-Christian century when our ancestors conceived of God as exclusively concerned with "Jewish interests" and blissfully indifferent to the fate of thousands of other Asiatics enslaved in the Nile Delta to the Pharaonic megamachine. The midrash did better than that. ("Will ye sing while my creatures drown?") We ought to do much better.

What Borowitz has nicely called the dialectic of Jewish particularity is precisely the issue today in American Jewish life. Borowitz himself offers us, typically, a theological cop-out. "We cannot dodge the fact that, for all our religion and education and affluence and technique, for all the gestures of human emancipation, our various collectivities remain a pretty ugly bunch. Man's will to evil is unredeemed. History remains God's problem."⁵ Such comments and, we may add, reactions such as the current specious trend to conservatism in American Jewish life tend to weaken the hands of those who believe—as did our ancestors at their best—that history is a product of cooperation between man and God. To be sure, that cooperation is more difficult than envisaged by Victorian liberalism. To deny the efficacy of man is to take away all hope.

The Maryknoll priest-psychologist, Eugene Kennedy, was recently quoted as saying that "prayer has more than once in history appeared in counterfeit form . . . we may be tempted to return to prayer in our day because, in spite of all our enthusiasm for renewal and for changing the face of the earth, we have found that this world is hard to budge. Prayer looks good when we have played our trumpets but the walls of the world's cities have not crumbled before us."⁶ So does conservatism. So does a divorce from traditional liberal concerns.

Jewish tradition can help us only to a limited extent. Living in two civilizations is the crucial *novum* of twentieth century Jewish life, not the Holocaust or Israel. We have suffered before, and we have had Jewish Commonwealths before, but never before have we had the opportunity to live as full citizens of the country in which we find ourselves, as well as being Jews. The ancient religious imperative of Jeremiah, under radically different political circumstances, still can adumbrate for us a continued sober involvement with liberalism despite the agonizing setbacks of this decade: "Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. 29:7).

4. See Brian Almqvist, "Soviet Policy Toward Its Jews," *Christianity and Crisis*, Feb. 8, 1971, pp. 8, 9, and, especially, the editorial by Trude Weiss-Rosmarin in *The Jewish Spectator*, March, 1971, pp. 2 ff.

5. Borowitz, *Op. cit.*, pp. 566-567.

6. *National Catholic Reporter*, Sep. 10, 1971, p. 12.

An Anatomy of Liberalism— A Conservative View

SEYMOUR SIEGEL

REPEATED STUDIES OF THE VOTING BEHAVIOR OF American Jews show that they are over-represented in the liberal wings of the national parties. Regardless of income and social status, Jews tend to favor candidates with liberal credentials. (In special situations this is sometimes changed. Mario Procaccino received about fifty percent of the vote in the Mayoralty election in New York in 1969 and Senator James Buckley received close to twenty percent of the Jewish vote in 1970—even though he was running against a Jew.) The legislative programs of the national Jewish organizations are little different from the platform of the most liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

Yet the very fact that this journal has arranged this symposium shows that there is a disquiet on the part of many Jews, resulting from the persistent identification with one tendency within American politics. Serious people are asking—is it time for a change?

Before answering this question it is necessary to define what we mean by the term “liberal.” The meaning of the designation has undergone great changes in the course of time. Both Gladstone and Senator McGovern are designated as liberals—but they have very little in common. So that the discussion be clear, let me outline what I believe is meant by the term “liberal” in the political discourse of our day.

1. *A tendency to favor liberty over order.* There is a bias among the upholders of the liberal point of view for liberty even when it is won at the expense of public order and public peace. Thus, they tend to be opposed to all forms of censorship; to any restriction on purely private activity; and to a strict interpretation of civil rights even when their enforcement endangers the peace of a community. A good example of this attitude is the reaction to the attempt of revolutionaries to disrupt the city of Washington in May, 1971. Though the police acted with efficiency and restraint, they were severely criticized for what may have been technical violations of civil rights.

2. *A tendency to favor government intervention over private initiative.* The solution to social problems is, generally, put into the hands of government. Large centralized bureaucracies are favored over private activities. There is a bias for public schools over private schools, public day care over private efforts, and public welfare over private philanthropy. The centralized government is seen as the most important factor in managing the affairs of men.

SEYMOUR SIEGEL is professor of theology at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

3. *A tendency to explain human behavior in terms of environment rather than individual will or heredity.* Criminal activities result—according to this view—largely from bad environment, rather than from a defect of will or character. Lack of performance in school or on the job results from racism or lack of social amenities, rather than a lack of determination, stamina or effort.

4. *A tendency to favor equality of possession rather than equality of opportunity.* The liberals tend to favor an egalitarian society based on equal possession of the goods of life rather than a society which makes possible individual achievement on the basis of effort and talent. They tend to favor that everyone finish the race in a dead heat, reaching the finish line at the same time, rather than making sure that everyone start out at the same place and letting the race go to the swiftest. This attitude leads to the suggestion recently made by Professor Gailbraith, in an article in *The New York Times*, that jobs which pay high salaries should be distributed so that women, Blacks, and other minorities (Jews are not considered minorities for these purposes) have the same percentage of these positions as is their percentage of the population. Another example is the astonishing conclusion made by a judge that if Blacks or Puerto Ricans do not successfully pass tests in accordance with their percentage of the population then the tests must be “racist.”

5. *A tendency to favor universal characteristics rather than particularistic ones.* The emphasis must be put on those factors which make men alike, rather than on those which make them different. Thus, liberals tend to downgrade nationalism, ethnic self-identification (except for Blacks), or endogamy. A curious twist of this argument is a view which espouses relativism in morals and religious truth. No claim of exclusive truth in ethics or worldview is accepted. All particular religions or ethical systems are variations of some basic world-view and, therefore, no one of them can claim absolute allegiance. This leads to a lessened appreciation of those aspects of life which are distinctive to particular individuals and groups.

6. *A tendency to favor left-revolutionary movements and nations.* Liberals tend to see left revolutionary states as promoting social justice and maintain that their excesses can be overlooked because they are basically trying to do the right thing. Thus, partisans of this point of view will argue for the recognition and tolerance of Castro Cuba and/or Red China, while agitating for the cutting off of diplomatic relations with South Africa, Greece and Spain. In recent years, liberals have tended to identify anti-communism as a cloak for imperialism.

7. *A tendency to relegate religion to the private sphere.* Liberals are strongly committed to the “separation of church from state.” Religion is seen as a purely private concern, having no right to claim governmental support or subsidy. This is especially evident in public education,

which should have no relation to religion, nor should the government in any way assist those institutions carrying on religious activities.

8. *A tendency to denigrate tradition in favor of novelty.* Constant change is favored over stability and tradition. The past is prologue to the more glorious future. Throwing off the restraints of tradition is nothing less than throwing off oppressive chains. Liberals are opposed to the sentiment expressed by an English thinker, "When it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change." ..

9. *A tendency to prefer change according to rational principle rather than in accordance with the specific facts.* There is no argument that it is frequently necessary to change. However, the issue, as Disraeli put it, is:

In a progressive country change is constant; and the great question is not whether you should resist change which is inevitable; but whether that change should be carried on in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, the traditions of the people or in deference to abstract principles and arbitrary general doctrines.

Liberals tend to favor change even when the facts seem to militate against modification of the status quo. A good example of this view is the case of "forced" integration. There is no question that, theoretically, integration is a good thing. But it is also clear that forced integration through establishing racial quotas and busing only tends to re-segregate the schools.

10. *A tendency to believe that all problems are solvable.* This philosophical principle is the cornerstone of the liberal world view. Since it is believed that human nature is perfectible and that history can redeem itself, social and political problems are the result of some defect in the arrangement of the environment. There must be a solution to all human problems, and the final eradication of poverty, human inequality, crime, war, and human suffering is delayed only by the lack of some alteration in one or more of the human institutions which we have created. This viewpoint sometimes develops into a utopianism which promises redemption within historical time through human efforts. There is a tendency to overlook the recalcitrant aspects of human nature or the built-in limitations of human culture and society.

These ten principles, as I see it, are the cornerstone of the liberal world view. They are, of course, not found in their pure form in any one liberal, but they do represent tendencies in all ideologues identified with this point of view.

The question now must be asked: how are we to assess these principles in the light of our recent experience? It is my belief that, as Americans and as Jews, we have arrived at the time for a change. Liberalism has performed yeoman service in the four decades during which it has been the dominant force in American politics. But it is time that we sought other alternatives. My reason for this stance is that the world-

view outlined above has not worked; it is, by and large, inimical to Jewish interests, and it does not reflect some of the basic tenets of the Jewish tradition.

It is clear that the applications of the liberal formulas of more government, more spending and more intervention have not worked to solve our pressing problems. In an excellent new work by Mrs. Alice Rivlin, *Systematic Thinking for Social Action* (The Brookings Institution) it is pointed out:

Those who cared about better education, health, and social services have until recently thought the main problem was underfinancing. They thought far too much was spent on the private sector and far too little on public needs. They were confident that an influx of resources into the public sector—for example, federal aid to education, would produce results. But the answer is not a simplistic spend more money. Even the liberals are no longer sure they would know what to do if they had more to spend for social services or that it would do much good.

The statistics on crime, welfare, racial tension and international disputes point to the failure of the liberal formulas. It has not helped the schools to manipulate them in the light of rational principles of racial balance or community control. Permissiveness in relation to student unrest, racial rioting, and public displays of immorality have not improved the schools, the lot of the poor or the quality of life. As Mrs. Rivlin and Dr. Daniel Moynihan have pointed out, the answer is not an easy request for more money. It is not proved that more money means more results. As Professor Nathan Glazer stated, in a recent article in *Commentary* outlining his turning from liberalism to a mild form of conservatism, the liberals failed to defend the integrity of rational inquiry and academic freedom in the universities when it was attacked by student rioters, and they have not appreciated the agonies of the victims of lawlessness, or the difficulties of the working man carrying a crushing burden of taxation in order to support expensive welfare programs. Permissiveness in the face of urban disturbances has not rebuilt the burned-out ghettos nor appreciably improved the lot of the long-suffering Blacks who seek to lead a reasonably good life. Though there may be some disagreement on the part of many, it is clear to a great number of observers that liberalism fails to pass the test of pragmatism. Pure and simple—in the past years it has not worked.

In addition to the fact that liberal programs for social betterment have, by and large, been failures, is the fact that their application has endangered the position of American Jewry. This is most evident in the racial area, the schools, and the international arena.

It is not necessary to convince the readers of this journal that Judaism is in favor of social justice, racial equality and compassion. However, in their liberal interpretation, they tend to compromise legitimate Jewish interests. Jews have always fought for reward on the basis of merit, rather

than on the basis of extrinsic factors such as political affiliation or racial or ethnic origin. It was felt (by and large correctly), that if everyone were given a fair chance, the Jews would benefit. However, the attacks on the merit system have become standard for the ideologues. The furtherance of "racial balance" in school administrative posts, university appointments, and political officials can only mean that Jews will be left out, as is already happening in the New York City school system, in the public hospitals, and in the administrations of large cities. The tendency to blame urban riots on the victims rather than the arsonists and thieves means, in effect, placing the burden of social guilt on Jewish businessmen. The advocacy of huge public housing projects in largely Jewish neighborhoods means the disintegration of those neighborhoods and the destruction of Jewish institutions laboriously built up over generations. The tendency of liberal politicians to tolerate "leaders" of minority groups who are either anti-Semitic or anti-Israel spells danger. As Earl Raab has pointed out, it is not anti-Semitism that we have to fear—but the acceptance of anti-Semites by forces that share, with the enemies of the Jews, other political objectives. Thus, it is more than *radical chic* to raise money for anti-Semitic Black Panthers; it is allying oneself with those who would dig our graves.

The liberal's fascination with the public school and his dogmatic opposition to aid to religiously-oriented schools is another example where Jewish interests and liberal ideology collide. It is clear that the future of Jewish identity and life in this country depends, in great measure, on the day school, and it is the height of irony that Jewish money is being spent by Jewish organizations to fight any attempt on the part of the government to alleviate the burden of maintaining these schools. The supposed wall of separation between church and state is breached a hundred times by the payment of chaplains, by the exemption from taxes for religious institutions, of special tax benefits for clergymen, and the like. Somehow, aiding yeshivot and day schools is impossible. There is no more disastrous alliance than that of the Jewish community with the liberal ideologues against the parochial and religiously-oriented school.

In the international sphere, the main Jewish concern is, of course, Israel. At the moment, the main opponents of Israel are the countries of the communist bloc and the United Nations. Many liberals and radicals, caught up in the mystique of the Third World, have espoused the cause of Israel's enemies. In addition, the communist bloc nations, especially the Soviet Union, are the centers of anti-Jewish agitation in the world. To weaken the cause of anti-communism is, therefore, in a sense, to weaken the thrust against Israel's enemies. The treatment of Soviet Jews means a relentless campaign against Soviet tyranny. It would seem plausible that ideologues committed to seeing anti-communism as obsolete cannot be our true friends. Liberals, too, have committed themselves

to the mystique of the United Nations. Whatever the importance of that world organization, it has shown itself to be an implacable enemy of Israel. Political ideologists who believe that the United Nations is the last hope for peace on earth cannot be staunch defenders of Israel against whom the UN has constantly spoken and acted. Unpalatable as it may sound, the armed forces of the United States are the only effective force standing between communist domination of large parts of the globe and a modicum of freedom. Attempts to weaken the military posture of the United States and to denigrate America's role in the geopolitical arena would seem to be dangerous to world peace and, especially, to Israel.

Any realistic analysis of the situation of the Jews in the world points to the fact that violent social change is harmful to Jewish interests. Thus, Castro's revolution meant the end of the Jewish community in Cuba, Allende's success means the end of the Jewish community of Chile, and leftist revolutions in other countries such as Argentina will spell the end there, too. This is true, not because Castro and Allende are anti-Semites. As a matter of fact, they are just the opposite. But the interest of the Jews is dependent on stability, free enterprise, and reward according to effort. Insofar as liberalism supports radical social change and the abolition of private ownership it is opposing Jewish interests. Furthermore, the liberal bias for universalism, its abhorrence of nationalism and "tribalism," makes Jewish survival secondary to the achievement of a "peaceful" world. As one observer put it, it is felt that Jews must commit suicide in order to bring the Messiah. Thus, the application of liberal principles is, by and large, unfriendly to Jewish interests. Let it be pointed out that there is nothing nefarious about worrying about one's own survival.

In addition to what has been said above, it is my opinion that the liberal world view clashes with the Jewish view of reality and life at many crucial points. In the Spring, 1964, issue of this journal, Professor Wyschograd wrote:

Judaism has never been radical in the economic or political sense of that word. It has been a religion of law against anarchy, of reverence for the past and love for its traditions and heritage. It has always had a very realistic appraisal of what lurks in man and the necessity for social and political bounds within which responsible freedom is exercised.

Judaism has been law-oriented, tradition-oriented, and reverent of the past. It has not been against change, but always asked that this change be undertaken in accordance with orderly principles and procedures. Judaism has been synonymous with the call for justice which meant equality before the law "without respect for persons." It has recognized that there would always be rich and poor, powerless and powerful, ignorant and wise. The differences in social station or achievement

do not, of course, in any way effect the status of the person before God, nor his right to be treated with dignity and compassion.

Judaism is aware of the ubiquity of the *yezer hara* and, thus, is wary of the centralization of power which only tempts toward oppression and tyranny. It recognizes the necessity of government to stem the excesses of human evil, for were it not for the government "men would swallow each other up alive." But, most of all, Judaism is wary of utopianism, which is another name for false messianism. True messianism generates social action—for it promises that what we do in historical time will be fulfilled. But Judaism affirms that in historical time men cannot solve all problems. Schemes for bringing salvation in historical time are false messianisms wreaking havoc and destruction. Men who promise a heaven on earth usually succeed in creating a hell on earth. At all of these points Jewish teachings are contrary to liberal ideology.

Thus, if we examine what I see as the ten theses of the liberal world view they do not agree with the Jewish world view. Judaism seeks to preserve personal liberty but limits this liberty in the interest of public order and welfare. Traditional Judaism did not tolerate public lawlessness, public displays of immorality or sexual permissiveness. Jewish teaching is suspicious of strong concentrations of power, since man's nature tends to turn all power into vehicles for self-interest. Traditional Judaism affirms individual responsibility and expects man to master his conditions and not to be overwhelmed by them. Judaism is passionate for justice, but realizes that in a human society there will always be inequalities which have to be mitigated by the rule of law. Traditional Judaism views the particular traits of nations and groups as important. Traditional Judaism does not relegate religion to a sphere of private activity. Rather, it expects religious principles and institutions to be visible in the corporate life of a community. Judaism is among the most tradition-oriented of world views, but it does not eschew novelty. It assimilates it within the tradition. Judaism is realistically aware of the limitations of human nature, the ubiquity of the evil *yezer* and the imperfections of human societies. And, above all, Judaism is anti-utopian. It affirms messianism over against utopianism. Messianism means the redemption of human society and the cosmos by a Power beyond history—while utopianism affirms the possibility of redemption within history by history-making men.

The abandoning of liberal ideology does not mean a weakening of the passion for social justice. How could one be a Jew without a concern for the widow and the orphan? It does not mean a satisfaction with the *status quo*. How could one be a Jew and be satisfied with any level of human achievement? We must be for justice and for improvement of our social order. But these changes and these advances must be achieved in accordance with the facts and with a profound awareness of the

limitations of human achievement. As Professor Heschel has so eloquently put it:

It (Judaism) claims that man has the resources to fulfill what God commands, at least to some degree. On the other hand, we are continually warned lest we rely on man's power and believe that "the indeterminate extension of human capacities would eventually alter the human situation." Our tradition does not believe that good deeds alone will redeem history; it is the obedience to God that will make us worthy of being redeemed by God. . . . At the end of days, evil will be conquered all at once; in historic times evil must be conquered one by one.

In Defense of Liberalism

ARTHUR J. LELYVELD

THE TERMS OF THIS QUESTION AND THE CONSEQUENT debate are confusing because of the lack of definition. Read the current attacks on an assumed "Jewish alliance" with liberalism and you will find that "liberalism" means campus revolutionaries, "groveling" college administrators, John Lindsay, Black Panthers, Protestant and Catholic churchmen who failed to come to our side during the Six-Day War, and Arthur Goldberg.

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

The word "liberal" has been applied to such a variety of political animals that the meaning is emptying out of it. For those who identify with it, it means "forward-looking," dedicated to social progress, world peace, human brotherhood. For conservatives, authoritarians of the right or left, liberal means shilly-shallying, a gentle middle position, the vacant mind instead of the open mind. For his opponents, the liberal is "mealy-mouthed" and a do-gooder.

But liberalism is a word that deserves to be redeemed. It describes one of the most productive revolutionary currents of world history. It means commitment to freedom as both goal and method.

Liberalism is not an "ism." It is a stance—a set of values from which to approach both social and interpersonal problems. It makes room for a variety of convictions about ultimates—from the affirmation that our unalienable rights as individuals are the gift of our Creator to the naturalistic liberalism of John Dewey and his disciples.

Deists, utilitarians, *philosophes* of the enlightenment era, all sought those changes that would tend toward political freedom and economic democracy. In wanting to *liberate* men, to free them from "the dead hand of the past," they were liberals.

A term should be defined by its historic intent and its normative use—not by the ways in which it has been misused and misappropriated. And, historically, liberalism has meant the application of intelligence to human problems. It has not, in the past, excluded the adoption of revolutionary techniques nor the search for radical solutions. It is grounded in two basic presuppositions:

1. a concern for people and for humane values; and
2. an insistence on freedom to think through every problem without prior ideological constraints.

ARTHUR J. LELYVELD is Rabbi of Fairmont Temple, Cleveland and President of The American Jewish Congress.

Liberalism is open to the infinite possibilities of human development. It seeks those changes that promise to enhance human welfare and human freedom.

It is a difficult stance, for it demands study. Decision-making must be founded on knowledge. In an age of sloganeering and the search for "instant credibility," it requires reading and thoughtfulness—and, as always, the real enemies are ignorance and sloth. Collectivist creeds and authoritarian ideologies are beguiling in their freedom from these requirements. After the initial conversion, one need only follow. Value judgments need no longer be made. One can give his full attention to tactic.

The alternatives to liberalism are hide-bound traditionalism, authoritarian ideologies or the defense of the status quo. The alternatives to freedom are the cynical control of the few or the great beast of mass mindlessness.

Those who call upon Jews today to "abandon the liberal alliance" have adopted a supposedly pragmatic position founded upon a misuse of the word "liberalism." Many of those against whom they direct their fire never were liberals and never even thought of themselves as liberals. And many of those men and movements who have arrogated the adjective to themselves lack the qualities and predispositions that define liberalism. Not everyone who would like to be thought "liberal" acts or thinks "liberal." This is a fact of life that Ezekiel described 2500 years ago when he warned against those who cover a tottering wall with whitewash and cry "Peace" when there is none.

Movements of "national liberation" have frequently been remarkably impervious to liberal principles, and so-called "liberal churchmen" act, at times, in illiberal fashion. It should not be surprising that "progressives" or advocates of revolutionary change are sometimes ridden by their own illiberal prejudices. But anti-Semitism "in articulate segments of the black community" is not liberalism, and the mindless emotionalism of the "counter-culture" is not liberalism.

What the argument for a "divorce" [ridiculous figure of speech, since there has been neither formal betrothal nor informal *shiddukh* with modern liberalism] reduces to, is a demand that Jews plan their political and civic activities solely on the basis of a calculation as to what is "good for the Jews"—shades of the second-class citizenship of pre-Zionist days! One exponent of this view flatly calls for the endorsement of candidates of "any political persuasion" so long as they are pro-Jewish and pro-Israel. Another says, "The most important question, therefore, is: What type of society will be best for the survival of the Jewish community?" Do not struggle for the rights of others, we are warned, because they will neither love you nor repay you and, in the end, they may even turn against you.

No one who takes seriously the mandates that flow from our Jew-

ishness could long sustain this mood of bald self-interest. Hillel's paradox is immediately relevant. Its first part—"If I am not for myself, who is for me"—is wholly pragmatic; the second part—"If I am for myself alone, what am I?"—abandons unadorned pragmatism for a judgment founded on a universally compelling value. The most important questions, Hillel's position would say, in contrast to the anti-liberalism question just posed, are: How can the Jew survive, and continue to serve the values that give meaning to his survival, in any kind of society? How can he best build the kind of society that will most reflect his values of individual freedom and human dignity?

The mandates of our heritage would be self-defeating if they required us to cooperate with forces that would destroy us, but they certainly do not require us to put our own welfare above the central task of *tikkun olam*, the perfecting of our world.

If individual freedom, human dignity and an insistence on the right of man to apply his intelligence, as well as his values, to the tasks of problem-solving, are the touchstones of the liberal ideal, it must be evident that it is an ideal that lies deep within the nature of normative Judaism. The prophetic-Pharisaic line of concern for the dispossessed, the effort toward periodic redistribution of the sources of wealth, the specific provisions for the protection of strangers and slaves, the Talmudic openness to dissenting opinions, and the insistence—revealed in the remarkable parable about Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer—that nothing, not even heavenly voices, may be allowed to interfere with the democratic process of decision-making by men, could all be documented to show that there is a union between Judaism and true liberalism which may not be put asunder.

We are, nonetheless, vulnerable to illiberal sloganeering. It feeds on the deep frustrations and the real fears that are growing in the Jewish community. A phrase like "Never Again" has a powerful effect upon a people that has lived through a time of unimaginable evil. A rock through a window is an attention-getter in a world that is sickeningly indifferent. When frustrations are converted into tactic, we get the temper-tantrum techniques of the JDL, of Panthers both Black and Israeli, of Weathermen and assorted terrorists masquerading as "guerrillas."

But if we are to apply intelligence to the struggle for freedom—our own freedom and that of others—we must concern ourselves with the long-range effect of our tactics. Where—in terms of both ends of our paradox—will alliances with conservatives, fundamentalists and right-or-left totalitarians lead us? What will be the ultimate result of universalizing the tactic of terror: using verbal and physical bombs, deliberately destroying the possibility of rational discourse, shouting obscenities at women and children, beating innocent persons, threatening assassination and moving to actual attempts at murder? These are the fruits of nihilism

—and nihilism is not compatible with the thoughtful rebellion that seeks justifiable change. “Nihilism,” said Albert Camus, “confounds creator and created in the same blind fury.” It suppresses every principle of hope, and “adding to falsehood and injustice, destroys . . . its original demands and thus deprives rebellion of its most cogent reasons.”

The shouting match between repression by the powerful and the desperation of the powerless drowns the quiet voice of reason and provides the classic situation for the denigration and destruction of liberalism. That quiet voice of reason is the essence of what we have sought through the centuries. It is supremely important that it be heard.

A Call for a Reasoned Liberalism

ABRAHAM D. BEAME

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS DISCUSSION, IT IS immaterial whether one thinks of Jews and Judaism as a religion, a social organism, a political phenomenon, an economic dynamic, or, simply, a fact of life. From any point of view, they have, to this point in history, meant at least this much: compassion for the person and respect for the community. I think most American Jews believe this: the self-fulfillment of the person should not destroy the community, nor should the preservation of the community's norms and the achievement of its goals tyrannize the person.

In a perfect society, the delicate balance between the one and the many would mean a beautiful and painless adjustment of each to the other in meeting the changing pressures of the "outside" forces of God's environment and man's technology. In such a society, each would be perfected, completed, fulfilled in the other—the person in the community, the community in the person; the individual in the collective, the collective in the individual; man in the state, the state in man.

Unfortunately, we *are* not a perfect society; we are always *becoming* one. And in our becoming, we swing from right to left and back again. In adapting itself to existing, ever-changing conditions, the social order swings around a political center, sometimes expressing itself in "liberal" terms, and, at other times, in "conservative" terms. What is to be avoided at all costs is the degeneration and polarization of society into extremes on both sides of the political spectrum, for the apotheosis of community results in total state control, while an unrestrained and unlimited fulfillment of the person leads to anarchy. Now, in the course of history, one can point to a few Jews who were absolute statists, demanding the sacrifice of the person on the altar of community. On the other hand, one can also find Jews who were anarchists proposing the destruction of community in order to establish unrestrained rights for the individual. But I think that the overall history of the Jewish people shows that most Jews and the central thrust of Judaism have sought to maintain a balance, with a recognized pre-disposition to various degrees in favor of the person.

It is this bias for the person which has made the American Jewish community a "liberal" force, as we understand the term. This left-of-center orientation has stemmed, I think, from an irony of history. For four millennia, Jews have been a highly visible, sharply identifiable

ABRAHAM D. BEAME is *Comptroller of the City of New York*.

minority wherever they have been, bound together by tradition and a strong sense of community. Such a minority, which jealously preserved, guarded and actively defended its communal identity, was bound to invite persecution by various majorities. These majorities, especially, somehow seemed to feel their own security threatened when confronted by the Jewish adherence to traditions which the majorities could not share.

When a majority indulges itself in the persecution of a minority, it usually feels the need to legitimize its immorality by the passage of civil laws under which the persecution can be authorized. Thus, the persecutions of the Jewish people throughout history have tended to develop in most Jews a healthy suspicion of government, in general, and a strong need for becoming an influential part of specific governments. By direct participation in the government process, Jews felt they could contribute to the sense of moral and political health, in general, and to their own security, in particular.

The establishment of the American government, with its great concern for individual rights and the rights of all minorities, made America a congenial place for Jews to grow and prosper. There is another irony here. The religious, traditional and, therefore, essentially "conservative" character of Judaism has helped to create in Jews a great interest in the law. America proved ideal for this propensity. Through the close relationship between politics and the law, American Jews were able to assume influential positions on all levels of American government. The holders of such positions, by the very nature of their incumbencies, as well as their convictions, would tend to be "conservative" in their attitude and relationship to the system as such. On the other hand, their traditional and historic distrust of government, vis-à-vis the person, would tend to make them "liberal" in the way they used, or sought to use, governmental power. In this way, the American Jew has neatly balanced his "liberal" compassion for the person, with his "conservative" respect for the two communities of which he is a part—his own Jewish community, and the American community in general.

Now the New Left has reared its head on the American scene and, because of its excesses, the American Jew, in general, has developed a strong distrust for it. It is true that some prominent Jews have chosen to become identified with the New Left because of its aggressive defense of what it considered the rights of the individual. However, precisely because the aggressiveness of their defense has sometimes spilled over into violence, American Jews, in general, want to dissociate themselves from the New Left. Some are even beginning to question whether American Jewry should change its left-of-center orientation and tailor its liberal attitudes in order to meet the demands of the more conservative mold of the contemporary mood. I think this would be a serious mistake.

I certainly understand the fear which prompts Jews to consider a

shift to the right. Within the radical movements, there seem to be many diverse thrusts toward anarchy, excessive indulgence of the individual, and even a bid for the destruction of community. In such an overthrow, Jews, legitimately, fear that their own community would be the first to be submerged and, possibly, destroyed. History, unfortunately, provides too many footnotes with which to substantiate such anticipated concern. Consequently, to them, the solution lies in counter-balancing the excesses of the individual with a shift to the right, an identification with the collective, and, perhaps, an almost unquestioning support of the state.

I think that such a strategy loses sight of other pertinent lessons of history. When a revolution threatens an established order, the established order can react in only one way—in a series of repressive moves. For if the revolution cannot achieve its goals through established and orderly channels, it will, unhesitatingly, seek to effect its goals through violence and destruction. Inevitably, in such a contest of force, individual rights and the rights of existing minorities will be reduced in direct proportion to the intensity and duration of the violence, and may even disappear altogether. Moreover, whether an anarchic revolution succeeds or not, it must be followed by a period of near or complete state control. In either case, moving to the right will not help any distinctive minority, Jewish or otherwise.

I, therefore, sincerely believe that Judaism can best serve the preservation of the democratic community by maintaining its traditional “liberal” support of individual rights, its “liberal” compassion for the person, and its healthy “suspicion” of governmental centralism. By sustaining its long, left-of-center orientation in American politics, the American Jewish minority can continue to be a strong force, both in and out of government, for balancing off the ultra-right and the ultra-left, for nullifying the possible excesses of both “individualism” and “collectivism.”

When you come right down to it, the balance which Judaism accomplished between its compassion for the person and its respect for the community is the only way in which man and state can be fulfilled in each other. In other words, the Jewish position should continue to be summarized in the old liberal slogan, “government with a heart.” In the light of history, I see no good reason why that slogan is no longer valid.

Judaism, Jews and the Liberal Outlook

JACOB NEUSNER

TWO DISTINCTIVE ISSUES ARE BEFORE US, "Judaism and liberalism" and "the Jews and liberalism." These cannot be treated as one, because not all Jews are Judaists—that is, participants in the classic Judaic tradition in any of its modern forms. Indeed, the values and ideals of so few American Jews are shaped primarily by the classic Judaic tradition that one may doubt whether sufficient Judaists participate in Jewry to justify discussing *Judaism* at all.

The Judaic tradition cannot be characterized as liberal or conservative without imposing upon it concerns extraneous, in such a formulation, to its integrity. If one is lenient, that does not make him, in modern times, a liberal; if one is strict, he does not automatically become a conservative. Within the *halakhic* realm of discourse, a person may rule in a lenient way and thereby affirm a traditional viewpoint; he may rule in a strict way and thereby innovate. But overall, so far as contemporary liberalism believes in the perfectibility of the world by human devices, in the relativity of all values, in the *prima facie* excellence of change for its own sake, the classical tradition and the classical Judaic community which it produces cannot be called liberal. So far as contemporary conservatism ignores human suffering (as the liberals maintain), or favors the rich over the poor, or denies the possibility of human improvement, the classical tradition and community cannot be called conservative.

To speak in the name of classical Judaism—not merely of the Jewish community—on complex contemporary issues is not to be denied. No one faithful to the old tradition maintains it has nothing to say about, and to, the contemporary world. But to speak authentically, within the classic terms, in the name of the old tradition is more difficult than some suppose. It involves not merely polling rabbis, in the assumption that they know what they are talking about, all the more so asking the opinion of ordinary folk. It means searching out the tradition's pertinent opinions and weighing them in terms of the contemporary dilemma. Moreover, it requires that those who do the searching be men of probity, judgment, and faithfulness to the classical tradition. Merely finding what someone dead has said, without attention both to the legal context and to the spiritual discipline within which he spoke, is to conform to the form of the tradition and to ignore its spirit. Only those who

JACOB NEUSNER is professor of religious studies at Brown University.

spend their lives in the contemplation and realization of those old dead words know not only what they meant then but what they mean now. The pages of *Tradition* Magazine may indicate to the reader unable to follow *halakhic* journals something of the complexity of finding a true reply to a difficult question, something of the spiritual, not merely intellectual, discipline imposed upon him who would undertake the search. So to speak in the name of the Judaic tradition about contemporary issues is not to be taken lightly or done easily. It is, if possible, more difficult than praying. That is not to say we are free of the task. But it is to stress that things are just not so easy as people imagine.

What of the Jews and liberalism? That seems to me a separate, and more practical, matter. If the liberals are good for the Jews, they should enjoy Jews' support. And if the conservatives are better, then they should be able to win it.

Clearly, the Jews, partly for sound reason and partly for sentiment, feel more at home among the liberals. First, as everyone knows, the liberals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seemed to favor Jewish interests. Second, the liberals appeal to the eschatological hopes endemic in Jewry, hopes for the building of the perfect society—here, there, somewhere—and for the ending of the differences among men. But what the left was “liberal” about was the continued existence, in its own distinctive forms, of the Jewish people. The left promised to Europe that if the Jews were given the chance to assimilate, they would lose their distasteful, Jewish traits, and become like everyone else. Since nineteenth and twentieth century Jews wanted to become like everyone else, but not so much so as to stop being Jews entirely, this sounded like what they wanted to hear. As to the appeal to the Jews' hope for a perfect society, it was a case of promising in this world what had been adumbrated for the next. But what gave liberalism its appeal even to Jews who had no desire to give up their identity was the conservatives of the day, who had nothing to say *to* the Jews and nothing good *about* them.

Clearly, times have changed. And what we know about times past has changed even more. Jews brought up to revere the New Deal discover that, while they, among others, may have benefitted from its economics, they got very little for themselves out of its politics. Roosevelt's policy toward Jewish refugees and toward the extermination of European Jewry would seem to have differed from his professions, still more from the Jews' illusions. The Jews' capacity to tolerate the far left—in the theory that there are no enemies to the left—proves in retrospect to have served less than their best interest. The far left of Stalin's day was involved in the extermination of Soviet Jewry's slender cultural resources, and everyone knows the record of the far left toward Middle Eastern matters.

But the issues of the present are not decided even by the recent past. Here a very unsentimental assessment of the interests of the Jewish community must prove decisive. In my view, what the old liberals stood for was, and remains, good for the Jews: an open society, in which people, by their accomplishments, may enjoy a just reward, a society in which the personal rights and property of everyone are respected and honored, a society in which people do not suffer on account of race or religion or anything else. When Jews, or others, cannot gain entry through no personal failure but their not having been born something else, then we do not enjoy the rights of an open society. When Jews, or others, are denied the opportunity to overcome a past which has imposed its own disabilities, we do not enjoy the rights of an open society.

Now one asks: Who stands for the open society, and who seeks to abridge its rights? In a general way, no one would plead guilty to the charge of closing off opportunity to anyone. Here the realities of the moment preclude one's repeating generalities. In fact, the adoption of university quotas for some racial groups has limited the access to universities by Jews; not of rich Jews, who can pay their way, but of smart, but poor ones, who cannot. They are the losers. Here, two rights come into conflict. I have to stand by the poor Jews.

Who stands for a society in which property is respected, and who justifies the willful destruction of property? In general, no one says it is all right to burn or loot or kill. But, in fact, from the left we hear that all one can do is remove the causes of crime and protect the criminal, and from the right we hear that one must protect the property and rights of ordinary, working people, not merely of unhappy people or of people who did not have a father. Here two noble sentiments come into conflict, sympathy for the criminal and concern not to be his victim. I have to stand by the Jews, the victims of violence, rarely its perpetrators.

The relationship of the Jews to public issues is more complex than has been suggested. Jews are not only, or always, Jews. They are many other things. They have an economic interest which is not identical with their ethnic-religious one. They live in various regions, which have separate problems. They live in the centers of cities, and they live in suburbs. Those who want to have afternoon schools for their children's Jewish education must oppose busing. Those who do not care about their children's Jewish education—or think it can be achieved in other ways—will not oppose busing. Some Jews, particularly among the assimilated rich, have a deep need to feel good about the intractable poor (particularly *not* the Jewish poor). So they will explain away and forgive all, especially behavior which they would reject if done by their own kind. Other Jews, particularly in the middle classes and the poor, do not share that deep need. Life is too hard for them to afford the

luxury of a good, self-righteous conscience. All they want for others is what they want for themselves: one law, one standard for everyone. So they do not explain away and forgive in others behavior which they would not permit in themselves. So, in all, it would seem that the Jewish "community," in respect to public issues, ought not to exhibit uniformity of opinion, but great diversity. It would take more hard evidence than I have in hand to specify the shape of the political profile that would correspond to the social, economic, and cultural realities of Jewry. But I should not suppose that shape would be so one-sided as it now is.

One interest seems to me predominant, and that is support for the State of Israel. Its future is by no means so secure that American Jews may adopt an impartial view or an open mind. On the contrary, the State of Israel remains in a protracted conflict with very difficult opponents who, themselves, enjoy immense resources and overwhelming international support. It is not the time to see the right on each side. It is the time to say, *Are you with us or with our foes?* If we find friends on the right, then they will be our friends. If we find enemies on the left, then they must, without regret, be seen as enemies. Groups in American society which adopt a view contrary to ours in respect to the Middle East must be seen as enemies and, with regret, treated as such. No friend can be ignored. In our own group we must be prepared to recognize those who, for whatever reason, do not share unequivocal concern for Zion. We must even be willing to call the anti-Israel-Jewish-radical a bad Jew, if it comes to that. Not all opinions are equally legitimate. Not all alternatives are sound and authentic expressions of either the Judaic position or the Jewish interest. There can be no room within the diverse life of Jewry for the renegade, and today's renegade is the Jew hostile to the survival of the State of Israel. This seems to be obvious, but, in context, requires saying.

What of the Jews and politics? My only firm conviction is that things are not so easy or clear as they have seemed. Perhaps they never were. It is for loyal Jews who are informed on the realities of contemporary politics to discuss the Jewish interest, if any, in those realities. It is for loyal Jews who stand close to men of power, or who themselves exercise political or economic power, to say what they see, as Jews, from the heights—if, as Jews, there is something to be seen. To be sure, in the discussions of the informed students of society and politics, as in the perceptions of the people of power and of scope, one may discern a certain lack of unanimity about what the Jews should and should not do. I should think that that diversity is healthier and closer to the requirements of the day than is the present virtual single-mindedness in favor of one party in a multi-party world.

The Jewish Experience with Liberalism

J U D D L . T E L L E R

IN SPEAKING OF "JUDAISM AND LIBERALISM—Marriage, Separation or Divorce," the editor presumably refers to that loose consensual alliance beginning at the very center, and mobilized around specific issues, mainly in the field of social welfare legislation, civil rights and civil liberties. At its full strength, it includes the bloc of liberal Republican and Democratic legislators from the Northeast, as well as from the once Populist Mid-West regions; the AFL-CIO, the National Council of Churches of Christ, NAACP, Urban League, American Civil Liberties Union, and, in the future, is sure to embrace the Women's National Political Caucus, the Urban Coalition, and the Congressional Black Caucus.

It has been an inconstant coalition. The Jewish Establishment, one of its few stable components, has stayed with it through those depressing periods when the consensus was at its lowest ebb, and has often found itself alone with peculiar company, that left-of-center group of social action and civil liberties bureaucrats that is most identified with "the indifference, if not hostility, of many circles in liberal Protestant Christianity towards the State of Israel," and is least concerned about the "growth of anti-Semitism in articulate segments of the Black and other minority groups."

It seems that, as with the events of the Exodus from Egypt, each generation of Jews, in turn, must relearn that liberals and radicals, despite their pretenses, are not necessarily more acutely sensitive than others to the plight of Jews and, for that matter, of other minorities. As in the case of a certain celebrated event in Jerusalem, this relationship often deteriorates into an obscene passion between the god that failed and his apostles and the people who rejected him.

No such ambiguity affects relations between the conservative defenders of the status-quo and the Jew. The Jew expects no redemption through them, and they offer him none. Practice determines the limitations imposed by the social contract between them. His status, depending on time and place, may be comfortable, tolerable, or unbearable; it is only rarely unpredictable. The liberal and radical movements introduce the element of unpredictability. They promise him free title, then encumber it with restrictive covenants born out of their inflexible con-

JUDD L. TELLER is an author and a consultant for the Synagogue Council of America.

viction that they have been entrusted custody of all mercy and justice and, very nearly, of the revealed truth. They selfrighteously dictate to the Jew his proper attitude on Israel, and ever since the French revolution have intermittently been distressed that the Jews insist on classifying themselves as a people. This insistence is as much at the root of the Christian churches' silence in the tense days of May and early June, 1967 as it is at the root of Soviet policy towards Jews.

The Jews are not unique. Their global ubiquity has made them the prime exemplar of a repulsive universal condition. The Blacks in the United States and other minorities elsewhere, in Asia and Africa, have had similar experience with movements for social change. They are advised, as was the Jew by some of his most earnest supporters in the pre-emancipation debate in the French assembly, that the price of equality is total assimilation. Yet those who pay that price soon discover, as Jews repeatedly have, that the bottom has dropped out of the genosucide market and that equality is not purchasable. Whichever faction prevails in a majority's intramural struggle, the minority has no options.

Reinhold Niebuhr stated the dilemma with supreme clarity some two decades ago when he castigated Christian America not to use tolerance as bait to trap the Jew into religious conversion or ethnic assimilation. It will not work. "We should not ask this particular miracle to fit any kind of logic or conform to some historical pattern," he wrote. "It must be appreciated for what it is."

Some radicals and liberals find this counsel unacceptable and, in this matter, are at one with Christian theology's strict constructionists. They view Jewish peoplehood as inconceivable, an unrepentant presence, a historical mishap. Israel compounds that condition. They are honestly baffled that the Israelis see no merit in the proposal to dissolve their state and merge it into a nonsectarian democratic Palestine state. If the Israelis fear that they might then be cast into the sea, the Arabs have offered assurance that that is not their intent, and, at any rate, guarantees can be provided to forestall such an eventuality.

It seems almost as if Israel were only a secondary target, viewed as an extension of American Jewish ethnicism, and it is the latter which they find repugnant. Yet, without sensing the paradox, they approve, and even celebrate, Black ethnicism. Harsh castigation of Israel would seem their substitute for the castigation of the American Jew which, since the end of World War II, has been socially improper. However, fashions do change, and when that day comes, the issues of the Christian Century of the 1930's and 1940's, as a study by Rabbi Hertz Fishman shows, will provide a ready store of weaponry. Protocol and taboos notwithstanding, liberal impatience with American Jewish ethnicism pierces through the best-laid euphemisms, as it did in the MacIver report com-

missioned in the 1940's by the Jewish community relations agencies, and, as it does, more recently, in the reference, half playful, half admonitory, to "the Jewish cult" in American writing, in the suggestion in the Friends' recommendations for a Middle East settlement that it is the collective responsibility of U.S. Jewry to persuade Israel to accept these recommendations.

The Jews' adverse experience with American radicalism goes back to before the Civil War. The Jewish population numbered only 150,000, yet the Abolitionists from time to time singled them out for special attention. The Jewish consensus was Unionist, not Abolitionist. Some distinguished rabbis who spoke out boldly for Abolition had to flee their cities with the mob at their heels. There was a Jew in John Brown's Harper's Ferry raiding party. However, whenever a rabbi, politician or journalist displeased them, the Abolitionists would turn on all Jews in scathing indignation.

Horace Greeley, champion of the underdog, supporter of farm communes, who corresponded with the leading Continental radical thinkers, from time to time inserted in the New York Tribune, which he edited, poisonous paragraphs about the Jews, from his own pen, and in unsigned correspondence from Europe by one Karl Marx. Several decades later, the Populists, who were prompted by prophetic passion, polluted their cause by circulating myths that the silver advocates were opposed by a conspiracy of goldhoarding Jewish financiers dictating policy to Christian governments and plotting to establish a Jewish world rule.

In the fateful 1930's, when the Jews in Germany were being dragged back into the medieval ghetto along the route that ended in Auschwitz, American Jews turned for support to the liberals and radicals who, they discovered, although anti-fascist, were divided on Nazi policy towards Jews. Dr. Stephen S. Wise appealed to a meeting of leading liberal Christian clergy to join him in public protest. He had walked with these men on industrial picket lines, marched with them in women's suffrage parades, and served with them on committees for clean government and other civil causes. In their most professional, solicitous manner they explained to their good friend, the rabbi, that he was evidently and understandably emotionally upset, yet he should realize that, in the Jews' own interest, the matter required closer examination before deciding on any kind of protest. Liberal intellectuals then acquired a pastime which lasted a full decade, and could be called "the leisurely examination in public print of the Jewish problem," of the Jews' grievances and Germans' charges. These only too frequently concluded with a stern rebuke to the Jews of America to refrain from provoking their fellow-Americans to German fury. The editors of *The Spectator*—most

notably Theodore Dreiser—spent an afternoon brooding on the Jewish problem. The published transcript reveals it to have been an anti-Semitic orgy. In private correspondence Dreiser later enlarged on the theme, suggesting that American, and all other, Jews be transplanted to some remote island to prevent them from polluting the gentile environment. Exposure of this correspondence caused a furor, but did not disqualify Dreiser from addressing rallies, signing petitions and gracing the stationery of Communist-initiated popular fronts against war and fascism. *The Saturday Evening Post*, in several successive issues, carried articles with Jewish bylines both for and against the Jews. *The Atlantic Monthly* published the first of a series of two articles by a distinguished liberal, which read like a bill of particulars against American Jewry. A wide ranging symposium was to follow, but the issue with the first piece hit the stands on the day that the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor, so the series was dropped. The agrarian Populists in the Congress of the U.S., who had once been the idols of East Coast socialists and liberals, went gunning after the munitionmakers and war profiteers, and ended up as soloists in the German-American Bund chorus, accusing American Jews of warmongering. Eventually, the Populists, Socialists, Communists and liberals joined Charles A. Lindbergh in the America First Committee.

Thus, American Jewry's experience with the radicals and liberals has been rich and checkered. This does not mean that we should abstain from their movements and causes. They are still the one real source from which the Jew might draw his potential allies, but it does suggest that American Jewry should exercise selectivity, discrimination and restraint, and be sparing of its energies and resources in joining alliances. Yet the American Jewish Establishment has learned little; in the 1930's it was primarily Jewish campus youth who became involved in alliances. Since the end of World War II, the Jewish Establishment, itself, became engaged. To cite only one example: during the two decades of the civil rights struggle in the courts and legislatures which preceded the Black revolution, the Jewish Establishment often confused its *amicus curiae* role with that of principal and the Black's bleeding as its own stigmata. The Jew's large presence in that struggle has been misread by young campus Blacks today as evidence of the Blacks' insufficiency then. This misreading has resulted in self-inflicted humiliation and, to compensate for it, they decry the civil rights struggle of the 1940's-50's as a self-serving Jewish design which used the Blacks as a buffer against white anti-Semitism and which actually delayed their Revolution. This unwarranted misreading of that event presents them with a dilemma that is almost as serious as the emergence of Israel is to Christian theologians. If the civil rights struggle was indeed its womb, then the revolution, from this distorted prism, is neither Black nor beautiful, but the high yaller offspring of miscegenation.

This reaction of today's young Black intelligentsia should have taught Jews that excessive, indeed possessive, involvement in another people's struggle is bound to have pathological consequences for all concerned. Some within the Jewish Establishment insist, nonetheless, that their policy was right, not only in the past, but is right also today. The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council—the qualifier, “Jewish,” is a relatively recent addition to its name—is the federal reserve repository of the Jewish community's wisdom in interfaith and inter-race relations. In June of 1971, both its outgoing and incoming presidents expressed public apprehension that the Jewish community was turning inwards, away from larger concerns. All that the evidence shows is that the community may have reached that passage in life when promiscuity is no longer a pleasure but a burden, and that it has considered giving its marital obligations equal time with its non-sectarian grand passion. But even that has not matured beyond the stage of a New Year's resolution.

Involvement with great liberal and radical causes has been presented as an acting-out of the Jewish prophetic tradition. That is a selective term. Jewish tradition is a totality, including prophecy, law and custom, both clear sight and Messianic vision, and selecting only part of it distorts the whole as well as the symmetry and substance of each of its parts.

The term “prophetic Judaism” was first put into circulation by the early Reform rabbis in Germany, and was their warrant for housebreaking Judaism for the acculturated upper class and its social satellites by spaying it of its richest traditions and ethnic vigor. Furthermore, the term provided the acculturated Jew with the conceit that his obscene pursuit of social acceptance by his Christian peers had a divinely-preordained higher purpose. But for differences of time and environment, such has been, universally, the “prophetic” Judaism of this class of Jew. The “prophetic Jew” gravitates, in politics, to the liberal wing of his country's Establishment, while his children sometimes turn from the parental bourgeois environment, because of its social limitations on the Jew, to Populism or more formal radical doctrines, a process which produced Leon Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg. It also fathered the Russian Jewish radicals who, in 1881, were persuaded that the pogroms of that year had constructive purpose as a prelude to Revolution, as well as the young Jews on the American campus today who similarly empathize with Black Panther anti-Semitism and with Al-Fatah.

After World War II, the American Jew of East European background had reached that stage of his embourgeoisment when some of his fellows were supremely flattered to be mistaken for Gentiles. America was in the throes of her great consumption revolution and, suddenly, upper class amenities became available to the middle class, and middle class amenities to the working class. Even experts mistook this phenomenon for social mobility, evidence of an ultimately classless capitalist

society. The irrepressible GNP required new labor forces which had to be quickly trained and deployed, even as officers are commissioned and callow recruits are ordered into battle when all the defenses are caving in. Professional schools dropped their ethnic quotas and WASP-restricted occupations were opened to all but Blacks. The Jew was carried forward by this maelstrom from law, medicine, and garment manufacture into research, and promotions, and sales executive posts in hitherto *Judenrein* industry, from the sheltered inner city ghetto into the more open suburban society, all the while ecstatically adopting, as if they were a special franchise, the fashions in living of his economic peers.

Were he true to the traditions of his class of Jew, he might have reciprocated for the new openness towards him by apostatizing from his ancestral faith. But that was neither the place nor the season for such behavior. He might have startled his neighbors, unpleasantly perhaps ("the Russians are coming!"), in multidenominational suburbia, had he applied for membership in their churches. All they expected of him was that he affiliate with his own house of worship: hence, the proliferation of synagogues in the 1950's. He spent his Jewish passion on Israel-oriented causes which were both sincere and advantageous; Christians had not yet recovered from their embarrassment over the Holocaust, and empathy for Israel was at its peak. He developed a new dimension of activity, Jewish community relations, designed to keep the ethnic profile low, the Prophetic posture high. It was the suburban Jew's bridge to his Christian neighbors that some day might extend, as he hoped, beyond the five o'clock afternoon shadow. It was the beginning of the alliances now under review.

In the 1950's the issue of church and state separation hit the courts, with the Catholics pressing for a relaxation of the principle, the Protestants insisting on its re-affirmation. The issue had never before been meaningful to the Jew. In the mid-nineteenth century when it last engaged him, he was concerned, not with separation, but with equality for the Jewish faith. In the 1950's, however, the Jewish community relations agencies flocked to the Protestant banner, and were soon carrying it forward as if the battle were theirs, above all others. At Christmas time, under this banner, they filed litigation to bar carols from the public schools, crèches from city hall lawns. Even some Christians who strongly supported the constitutional separation principle viewed these as folk customs, not religious practices, hence the Jewish court suits as humorless, and the intensity with which they were pursued as needlessly risking emotional hostile reactions.

The Jew of a preceding generation, in predominantly Jewish inner city neighborhoods, saw no reason to be exercised by Christmas customs in the public schools. He never doubted his children's immunity to Christological influence and never questioned the essentially Christian char-

acter of American culture. The suburban Jew objected, not because he felt his religion threatened, but as a means of enlarging the social franchise beyond the five o'clock shadow. He invested, for similar reasons, in interfaith dialogues, hoping, under cover of pasteurized religious discourse, to scale the walls of sectarian privacy and extend the area of social intercourse. That is why he did not comprehend the paradox in charging the Jewish community relations agencies with the simultaneous tasks of opposing infringement on the separation principle and developing interfaith dialogues.

To borrow Charles S. Liebman's perceptive comment in a related, yet different, context, "style may be more important than policy content" to the liberal Jew. Applied Jewish community relations policy emphasis was less on relations, than on public relations. That is one of the reasons why it was only in the 1960's, under the pressure of independent activities of Jewish groups on campuses in Cleveland and elsewhere, that the Jewish Establishment made the problem of Soviet Jewry one of its primary concerns. Its previous reluctance reflected its obsession with style and fear that the liberal might interpret Jewish protests as contributing to the cold war.

When the Jewish community did finally commit its energies to the Soviet-Jewish problem, it argued the issue of religious freedom, and not the larger one of ethnic rights, which is at the heart of the problem. The reason, again, was style. The American Jew had been defined as a member of a religious denomination. The American liberal did not take lightly to ethnic definitions. It was only when, in backing Black studies, the liberal was trapped into reversing his position on ethnicism, that the Jewish Establishment began to argue Soviet-Jewish problems in ethnic terms. For a long time it pretended that Black anti-Semitism did not exist, even as the Black Establishment, stunned by the rise of Malcolm X, maintained embarrassed silence while he thundered violent anti-Semitic rhetoric. The Jewish Establishment discovered Black anti-Semitism only at the point at which it became apparent that anti-Semitism, Black and white, was in resurgence, and its primary target was the upper class suburban Jew; that it exploited the grievances of ethnic groups at the blue-collar level in contest for middle class status, and was directing its fire at the Jewish hospital administrator, educational executive, and candidate for high office.

At this point, the Establishment discovered, with *enfant terrible* Rabbi Meir Kahane and his JDL pointing the way, the "down under" continent of American Jewry, the more than one million Jews, largely in the inner city, who live at the poverty level, and of whom it had hitherto been unaware in its pursuit of a proper public image. It has been a most timely discovery. Without it, in the crucial days ahead, Jewish suburbia would seem to be speaking for privilege—its own.

The fact is that for more than two decades the Jewish community relations agencies had, indeed, been speaking for privilege. Their policy was designed by a class, consciously or unconsciously, to serve its specific class purpose, which was to assimilate and diffuse, rather than to preserve its ethnicism. Anything counter to this purpose was deemed vulgar, Populist, steerage-immigrant, which explains the low priority placed on Jewish education. The alliance with liberals to which the editor of *JUDAISM* refers has been largely fictive. That which has passed for an alliance has been composed of upper-middle laity and professionals—Protestants, Catholics, Jews and, of course, Blacks. The others each had an agenda of ethnic and religious self-interest. The Jew, alone, made almost no demands upon the alliance. He professed altruistic apprenticeship to abstract principle for which he sought little more than social approval. But altruistic posture invites condescension, ridicule, even hate. His purpose, in terms of the give-and-take that is the brick and mortar of any alliance, remained obscure through all the interfaith and interracial dialogues because it was too embarrassing to formulate: “All I want is to be loved.” Consequently, in crucial times, such as June, 1967, or when Malcolm X was rising into prominence on anti-Semitic rhetoric, the Jew came to his allies as a mendicant, unable to invoke clauses of a mutual defense treaty because his participation had been unconditional.

What does this suggest? The fictive alliance will have to become a very real one. It will have to be built anew, enlarged, both on the Christian and the Jewish side, beyond the present upper-class good-do'er fraternity. It will require more intensive cooperation with American labor which has been, for many decades, Jewry's most constant ally on Israel, and is more representative of the white ethnic sub-cultures than the parochial inverted groups who, speaking in their behalf, have recently entranced some of the Jewish community relations agencies. The alliance will have to be renegotiated, with each component separately, on specific issues, not on their merit alone, but also on the basis of reciprocity to the extent to which these issues are filtered through institutions. Jewish support should not be a blank check. It should be bartered. The alliance, such as it was, floundered, less through the fault of the Catholics, Protestants and Blacks, than because of the lack of Jewish hard purpose. “External policy” should be secondary to Jewish internal policy, the public image secondary to the self-image which has long been undermined by the Establishment's concern, not with what the Jew is, but with what others might want him to be. The Jewish community relations agencies, by the very nature of their expertise, are clearly disqualified for the new tasks. Under the new arrangement, their functions would be purely operational, and even these would have to be closely defined. Policy making should be outside their province.

How the Bible Begins

HERSHEL SHANKS

"Les traductions sont comme les femmes: lorsqu'elles sont belles, elles ne sont pas fidèles, et lorsqu'elles sont fidèles, elles ne sont pas belles."

"IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN and the earth." For 2000 years this is how the first verse of the Hebrew Bible has been translated into western languages. In contrast, the Jewish Publication Society's new translation of the Torah, first published in 1962, begins "When God began to create the heaven and the earth . . ." Whether these words should be the preferred ones is the burden of this article.

The possible implications of the differences between the translations are several, as we shall see, but the most obvious difference between the two is the literary quality of the result. When a translator starts with "When God began to create the heaven and the earth . . .," he does not have a complete sentence at the end of verse 1. To solve this problem, the new JPS translation combines the first three verses of Genesis into a single sentence: The first verse is a subordinate clause beginning with "When," the second verse is a kind of parenthetical thought set off by dashes, and the third verse is the main clause of the sentence. Here is the result:

When God began to create the heaven and the earth—the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—God said "Let there be light;" and there was light.

These same verses, as translated in the King James version are:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said "Let there be light;" and there was light.

I confess to starting with a definite bias in favor of this majestic prose. It is not familiarity alone that gives this translation its power. Its solemn cadence so fits the story of creation that it would, I submit, move one who had never heard it before. Moreover, this is true, at least in part, because the thought flows easily and understandably.

In marked contrast, the new JPS translation, by making these three verses into a single sentence, gives us a model of awkwardness, a clutter of thoughts crying to be sorted out. One is instinctively put off: "Shall

HERSHEL SHANKS is a Washington, D.C. lawyer who has written widely on matters of Jewish and legal interest.

I go on reading or shall I try to make sense of this jumble of words?" Surely we are off to a poor beginning.

For this reason, it seems to me that the burden is on the new JPS translators to establish that the meaning of the original Hebrew absolutely requires the translation to begin "When God began to create . . .," for if we confine our consideration to a literary or aesthetic comparison of the two renditions, it is clear that the King James version is far superior.

At the outset, it may be noted that the JPS translators are neither the only nor the first ones to begin with "When God began . . ." As early as 1924, James Moffett, in his admirable translation of the Bible, began the first verse of Genesis as did the JPS committee almost forty years later. In 1927, four scholars, under the auspices of the University of Chicago, shared a translation of the Old Testament in which the work on Genesis was done by the distinguished Semitic linguist, Theophile J. Meek. He, too, began with, "When God began to create the heavens and the earth . . ."

More recently, E. A. Speiser, who was a member of the JPS committee, translated Genesis for the Anchor Bible (1964). His version, in many respects similar to the JPS translation, as one might expect, also begins "When God set about to create heaven and earth . . ." Nahum Sarna, in his widely acclaimed commentary, *Understanding Genesis*, (1966) tells us that Genesis "opens with the phrase, 'When God began to create the heaven and the earth.'"

Finally, the recent (1970), and highly praised, New English Bible presents a slight twist on the newer translations which is obviously closer to the 1962 JPS than to the traditional King James version. The New English Bible begins thus:

In the beginning of creation, when God made heaven and earth, the earth was without form and void, with darkness over the face of the abyss, and a majestic wind that swept over the surface of the waters. God said "Let there be light," and there was light.

Turning backwards, we find that the more traditional translation of the opening verse of Genesis was first used in the Septuagint, the first Jewish translation of the Bible—from Hebrew into Greek—over 2000 years ago. From there it was taken into Jerome's Vulgate which begins "In principio creavit Deus coelum, et terram." Interestingly enough, Saadya Gaon's tenth century translation from the Hebrew into Arabic, which remains a towering accomplishment to this day, also follows the traditional formulation in making a single sentence of the first verse.

Although the Authorized Version of 1611, or King James version as it is more commonly known, is based on the original Hebrew, it was doubtless influenced by the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and established the traditional formulation in English, which was followed in the Isaac

Leeser translation of 1853 (the first Jewish translation of the Bible into English) and in the JPS translation of 1917. Also of note, the Revised Standard Version of 1952, the official Protestant one, opted for the traditional translation, although it obviously weighed the arguments for and against the alternative rendition.

Why, then, have the more scholarly recent translations created obvious literary and aesthetic problems for themselves by beginning with "When God began to create . . ." ? The answer lies precisely in their devotion to scholarship—scholarship in an almost technical sense—a devotion so intense, as I shall try to show, that it outweighed more important considerations, not only of literary beauty, but of the transmission of the overall meaning and impression of the original. As the King James translators were often slaves to the literal word in much of their work, so the recent translators are slaves to scholarship and grammar at the expense of clarity and beauty without any gain in meaning—or, at least, this is true in the opening verse of Genesis.

If one has not previously focused on the issue, I suspect one will have difficulty in understanding the difference in meaning between the new JPS translation and the more traditional one. Even with a rather thorough knowledge of English and after a careful reading, one may well fail to see what new meaning is transmitted, what different content is achieved, by beginning with the conjunctive clause "When God began to create . . ."

The two most recent scholarly discussions of the new translation of the opening of Genesis may be found in Speiser's brilliant commentary on the text in his *Anchor Genesis* and in Harry M. Orlinsky's *Notes on the New Translation of the Torah* (1969). However, their primary concern is with "grammar, context and parallels." What they say about meaning is clearly secondary. Two reasons are given relating to the meaning which the new translation may be expected to transmit, as compared with the more traditional one.

The first of these reasons involves the sequence of creation. The new translation, it is argued, resolves a conflict in the order of creation that appears in the older one. The first element to receive a name—which is tantamount, in the Bible, to existence or creation—is light, created (in verse 3) on the first day. Not until verse 7, on the second day, does God make an expanse above the waters which, (in verse 8), He names heaven. In verse 9, on the third day, God makes the earth by gathering together the water in one place, and names the dry land earth (in verse 10). Thus, the heaven (or the sky) and the earth are not created until the second and third days, respectively, after the creation of light. This sequence would seem to be in direct contradiction to the traditional translation of verse 1 as "In the beginning God created the heaven

and the earth.” In the beginning, He created light and only then did he create the heaven and the earth. So runs the argument.

However, the Hebrew phrase which appears in the opening verse of Genesis, *et hashamayim v’et ha arez*, literally, “the heaven and the earth,” is an example of a Biblical rhetorical device called merismus, which indicates the totality of something by referring to its extreme parts or to the first and last of a series, a symbolic selection of parts to represent the whole. An understanding of this rhetorical device as used in verse 1 will resolve the apparent conflict with verse 8 and 10. In the first verse of Genesis the phrase means, not literally “the heaven and the earth,” either as they are known to us moderns or even as they were known to the ancients. Rather, the phrase means what we would call the ordered universe, the beginning and end of all created things, the world, all there is. Thus, a more accurate translation—still in the traditional formulation—would be “In the beginning God created the universe” or “In the beginning God made creation.”

Thus understood, the conflict disappears. In the first verse, the writer is simply telling us that God made the universe. The writer is not telling us anything about the order of creation. That first verse is what we would have referred to in high school as the topic sentence of the paragraph. It tells what the story that follows is about, as is clear from the conclusion of the creation story: “Thus heaven and earth were completed.” (2:1) If “heaven” and “earth” were intended to be understood literally and separately, this statement could have been made after the third day, rather than after the sixth day; but properly understood as a merismus, it is true that, as we read in Exodus (31:17), “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth.”

Note that an understanding of this particular example of merismus helps us to understand the meaning of the passage, but it does not necessarily indicate that there should be a change from the literal translation of the merismatic phrase. I presented above two translations of the first verse of Genesis in which I rendered the merismatic phrase “universe” or “creation.” I referred to these translations as being more accurate than the traditional “heaven and earth,” but I did not say that they are preferred.

No translation will obviate the need for commentary on what the words really mean or intend to convey. We are perhaps 3000 years away from the writer and his culture. The implications of the text may not have been pellucid even when first written. Our aim, of course, is to understand what the Biblical writers meant, but sometimes, though not always, it is better to do so in commentary, than by a subtlety in translation. Therefore, I would not translate the phrase *et ha shamayim v’et ha-arez* as “universe” but retain the traditional “heaven and earth” even though this rendition requires some explanation.

Strangely enough, both Speiser and the JPS committee agree. Both retain the traditional "heaven and earth," though they are aware, of course, that here is an example of merismus and that the phrase meant, for the ancients, not two discrete items which failed to exhaust the universe of creation but, rather, denoted what we might refer to as the universe.¹

Thus, they would not change the phrase to "universe" in order to eliminate the conflict in the apparent order of creation as it appears in the traditional translation "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Yet they rely on the resolution of this conflict to support the change to "When God began to create the heaven and the earth . . ." I conclude that this difference in meaning is not the true source of the change, especially since, properly understood, there is no conflict. I am reinforced in my views by the fact that the new translation does not completely resolve the alleged conflict as to the order of creation. For if one were to parse these words, like a lawyer reading a mortgage, it can be argued that even in the new translation the *beginning* of the creation of heaven and earth preceded, at least in part, their creation on the second and third days of God's work. In short, an understanding of the merismus does resolve the conflict. We need not rely on an awkward translation to do so, especially when it does so imperfectly, anyway.

The second reason related to meaning which is given in support of the new translation is that it is silent on the philosophical question of *creatio ex nihilo*, while the traditional one inaccurately supports the doctrine of creation from nothing.

According to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, God created the universe out of nothing, presumably at the beginning of time. There is much in Jewish tradition—both in the Bible and later—which reflects a belief in this doctrine. However, most modern scholars, especially Jewish ones, are of the view that the doctrine is not implied in the creation stories as they were understood by the ancient Hebrews. Theodor Gaster has put the matter succinctly in his *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament* (1969):

To the Hebrews, as to most ancient peoples, creation was not a philosophical or metaphysical concept; it involved no question of the nature of existence or of the emergence of being from nonbeing. To create meant simply to give shape and form, and all Hebrew words which are so rendered derive from a vocabulary of handicraft.

As far as the Biblical text is concerned, verse 2 tells us the condition of the things *prior* to the creation of the universe. The *earth* was unformed and void (perhaps this was existence of a sort, and perhaps not); there was the *deep*, over the surface of which was darkness; and,

1. That Speiser and the JPs translators understood the difference is clearly reflected in the fact that they render *shamayim*, when used alone (in verse 8), as "sky," but as "heaven" when it is used in the merismatic phrase in Verse 1.

finally, there was *water*, over which the wind from God swept, or the spirit of God moved, depending on your translation. Thus, in the primordial time prior to the creation of the universe, there was a primordial existence as described in verse 2.

If one were to ask how the Bible can state that God created all there is and, at the same time, recognize that prior to that time primordial matter existed, the answer is that the ancient mind did not operate in the philosophical or intellectual mode. To quote Gaster again, "Things which *we* can express today by rational and speculative categories were articulated by our remote forbears in impressionistic images, and it is these images that inform myths." As Ernest Cassirer has pointed out, myth is the stuff of the affective, as distinct from the intellectual, side of the mind. Thus, the text does not reject the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*; it simply does not ask the question; it does not express itself in those terms.

When men began to ask philosophical questions and Jewish philosophers and others began to ask what the Bible had to say about *creatio ex nihilo*, support for the doctrine was sought and focused in the first verse of Genesis. "In the beginning," it was said, God created everything by an act of will. Although, as noted, the majority of modern scholars do not find the intellectual doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* imbedded in Genesis, the debate has by no means ended and, especially among more traditional exegetes, both Jewish and Christian, we find a vehement defense of *creatio ex nihilo* as having its source there.

It is with this background that the new translators argue that their statement, "When God began to create . . ." properly lends no support to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Their translation, unlike "In the beginning. . .," says nothing about the beginning of time.

Perhaps enough has been said about *creatio ex nihilo* to suggest that it should not be refuted by a subtlety in translation that destroys the beauty of the opening of the Bible, but, rather, by an understanding of the ancient mind, together with the philological evidence. This is especially so since the philosophers who have sought to find support for the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in the opening verse of Genesis have done so, not on the basis of a translation, but on the basis of the original Hebrew text.

It is also fair to say that the debate as to whether *creatio ex nihilo* is implied in the creation stories in Genesis will go on just as heatedly, regardless of which translation more accurately reflects the correct grammatical construction of the opening of Genesis. Those who contend that the creation stories imply *creatio ex nihilo* will not want for arguments, quite apart from the way Genesis begins. (See, for example, Professor Von Rad's highly respected commentary on Genesis: "Syntactically both translations are possible, but not theologically.")

Perhaps more important, whether *creatio ex nihilo* is implied in verse 1 depends, not so much on how we begin the verse, but on how we understand "heaven and earth." If we understand "heaven and earth" as everything there is or can be, then, to the modern mind, it would seem that neither time nor matter can pre-exist. This is true whether verse 1 is translated as a dependent or independent clause. On the other hand, if the concept of heaven and earth describes only an organized and ordered universe (as is suggested by verse 2), then a primordial pre-existence is not precluded. But this pre-existence is no more affirmed by "When God began to create. . ." than by the rendering "In the beginning God created. . ." In the latter translation, as in the former, we are describing the story of the creation of "heaven and earth," whatever that concept implies. If it does not preclude a primordial pre-existence, then the beginning we are describing is the beginning of that state of existence, namely "heaven and earth," not the beginning of the primordial pre-existence. Conversely, if "heaven and earth" does exclude a primordial pre-existence, then "When God began to create the heaven and the earth" would seem to imply *creatio ex nihilo* just as clearly as does the traditional translation.

The truth of the matter is that the new translators have not chosen their words because of the meaning they convey even to the careful reader. Meaning and its implications for *creatio ex nihilo* are clearly secondary. The real reason for the new translation is grammar. The first word of the Bible, *bereshit*, say the new translators, is grammatically in the construct, as opposed to the absolute form; that is, it bears a dependent or attributive relation to something that follows. Thus, it literally means "When [God] began" or "In the beginning of." In support of their contention they argue that both Rashi and Ibn Ezra, over 800 years ago, observed that *bereshit* was in the construct state. The new translators also note that the parallel creation story, beginning in Genesis 2:4b, also starts with a construct ("When the Lord God made heaven and earth"), as does the Babylonian creation epic, *Enuma Elish*.

It would be foolhardy for this writer to argue Hebrew grammar with these scholars, although it may be noted that a number of modern scholars deny that *bereshit* is in the construct state. Among them are Professor Umberto Cassuto, late of the Hebrew University, H. Strack, and B. S. Childs. Among the ancients, the Targum Onkeles understood the opening word as "In the beginning," and the greatest of the medieval Hebrew grammarians, David Kimḥi, was of the view that *bereshit* was not in the construct state. Moreover, even Rashi and Ibn Ezra appear to have disagreed as to whether *bereshit* in verse 1 is in construct to verse 3 (Rashi) or to verse 2 (Ibn Ezra). In this, the new JPS has followed Rashi by making verse 1 subordinate to verse 3, and the New English Bible has followed Ibn Ezra by making verse 1 subordinate to verse 2. Finally, a

number of scholars, such as Von Rad and Eichrodt, argue that both grammatical forms of the first word of Genesis are equally defensible philologically and syntactically.² But the crucial question remains: Even if *bereshit* is in the construct state, should the verse be translated as a dependent clause in English, or is it sufficient to comment on the fact by way of exegesis? Rashi gives us the meaning in Hebrew words different from those that the text uses. For Rashi, the Hebrew text requires an explanation, so we should not be unduly disturbed if our English translation needs one also. (Moreover, Rashi gives his explanation to refute those who would argue that heaven and earth were created before anything else.)

As we have seen, there is little to recommend the new JPS translation in terms of meaning. Regardless of which variant is used, "the problem [of *creatio ex nihilo*] is," as Professor Childs has observed, "essentially the same." Why, then, adopt a translation that has been aptly characterized as a *verzweifelt geschmacklose* construction, one which destroys a sublime opening to the world's greatest book. Even if *bereshit* is understood in the construct, the thought flows easily in Hebrew. It does not do so in English when the text reads, "When God began to create. . ." The translation should, therefore, be rejected.

2. An analysis of the grammatical question is highly technical, complex and difficult and turns on how the consonantal text of the first word is vocalized or pointed. If the first consonant (B) is pointed with a *kamaz*, the word is in the absolute; a *sheva*, on the other hand, suggests the construct (although some scholars do not concede even this much). Which pointing is correct depends in turn, on other uses of *reshit* in the Bible, on similar interpretive problems in the Bible, on the proper pointing of the second word in Genesis (although the relevance of this, too, is disputed), and the word order and construction of verse 2. Thus, for example, it is argued (Cassuto) that the word order and construction of verse 2 indicates that verse two can be neither a parenthetical expression nor a clause to which verse 1 is in construct. Therefore, verse 1 must be an independent sentence. Others (Orlinsky) argue that the word order of verse 2 suggests that it is a parenthetical expression, and, therefore, verse 2 must be a dependent clause.

Although the Masoretic text is pointed with a *sheva*, a number of early Greek transliterations suggest that in ancient times the first word was vocalized as with a *kamaz*.

Death as Estrangement: The Halakhah of Mourning

EMANUEL FELDMAN

THE MOURNING PRACTICES OF JUDAISM HAVE long been the subject of discussion among students of religion. Since the Biblical-Rabbinic mourning legislation does not invest these practices with any specific rationale, nor does the Talmud express any overarching purpose which would provide a unifying frame for these apparently discrete observances, the *halakhah* of mourning has historically provided fertile ground for numerous investigations which, in an effort to understand its complexities, have utilized a variety of yardsticks.

Some of the early anthropologists, for example, assumed that the mourning rites were fundamentally taboo measures designed to protect the living from the feared dead. Garments were rent and sandals removed in order to prevent the dead from attaching themselves to the clothes of the living. The mourner sat on the ground and hid his face in order to confuse the returning spirits of the dead. Ashes were thrown on the face, and the hair was allowed to grow long in an effort to make the mourner unrecognizable to these dreaded spirits.¹ But these scholars, in dealing with early Judaic customs, failed to take into account the fact that Biblical and Rabbinic Judaism had little patience with cults of the dead, with ancestor worship, or with rituals designed to appease the "evil" dead spirits.

Other scholars have stressed psychological, sociological, and utilitarian motifs, claiming that the mourning rites are expressions of grief which should not be repressed; or that the rites are important aids in the overcoming of grief;² or that they are a necessary means for restoring the cohesion of the group which has been profoundly shaken by death.³

While there is much validity to these motifs, they leave a great deal undone and unsaid, and tend to turn the mourning rites into a superficial textbook on group therapy. Certainly, the mourning laws have

1. See A. Lods, *Israel* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 225; and R. Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), pp. 25 ff.

2. Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathan David, 1969), in an excellent factual presentation, occasionally reverts to "psychologizing" the rites, as on pp. 77ff. Simon Noveck, ed., *Judaism and Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1956), pp. 105ff., is another example of this approach, as are the two articles by I. W. Kidorf, "Jewish Tradition and the Freudian Theory of Mourning" and "The Shiva: a Form of Group Psychotherapy," *Journal of Religion and Health*, 2 (1962-63), pp. 248-52 and 5 (1966), pp. 43-47; and C. Z. Rozwaski, "On Jewish Mourning Psychology," *JUDAISM* (Summer, 1968), pp. 335-45.

3. B. Malinowsky, *Magic, Science, and Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), pp. 52-53.

EMANUEL FELDMAN is Rabbi of Congregation Beth Jacob, Atlanta, Ga.

psychological and sociological benefits. One cannot dismiss cavalierly the impressive scholarly evidence which has been mustered in support of Jewish mourning practices by these two disciplines. But it does an injustice to the *halakhic* view of man to assume that its depths have been plumbed simply because we are able to discover in it facets which are congruent with current intellectual vogues.

Perhaps the search for a rationale ought to be put aside. Instead of viewing the mourning legislation as simply a set of laws among laws, it might prove more fruitful to view it as an expression of a profound religious *weltanschauung*.

This essay will investigate the mourning legislation as an expression of the life-view of Israel, and as a reflection of the classic Judaic view of man's relationship to God, to himself, and to death.

How should a mourner react to the fact of death? He has now experienced the death of a close blood relation. He has felt acutely the effects of the termination of life, and has seen the incursion of the desacralizing elements of death into the realm of what was once normative living. He has witnessed at close proximity the ultimate opposite of life: he has been brushed by the powerful non-life, non-divine force which is death and its accompanying *tum'ah*, defilement. Having known and experienced the absence of life and sanctity, he is now required by Jewish law to crystalize this cognition into concrete observances.

The initial seven-day period immediately following death is the most intensive period of mourning. During this time, the following are prohibited:

a) *Cutting of the hair*. This is based on Lev. 10:6.⁴

b) *Washing one's clothes*. This is based on II Sam. 14:2: "And Joab sent to Tekoah and he took from there a wise woman; and he said to her, 'Do thou mourn and wear mourning clothes, and do not anoint thyself with oil, and thou shalt be as a woman mourning for her husband for many days.' " The Talmud⁵ sees in the phrase "mourning clothes" a clear implication that the clothes she was bidden to wear were to be unwashed. According to one Talmudic opinion, the washing of clothes, itself, is not forbidden; the prohibition extends only to the wearing of newly-washed garments.

3) *Anointing or washing oneself*. This, too, is based on the above-cited passage. MK 15b also cites Ps. 109:18, in which water is parallel to

4. MK 14b; *Sem.* 7; cf. MK 18a; I Sam. 4:12; Is. 15:2; 22:12; Jer. 41:5; Micah 1:16. Cf. J. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 207 for a discussion of hair as a token of mourning in Egypt. For a good summary of the mourning laws see *Encyclopedia Talmudit* I (Jerusalem, 1955), "Avelut," pp. 26b-36a.

5. MK 15.

anointing with oil.⁶ That washing is normally a part of anointing is indicated from Ruth 3:3, which mentions them together: "Wash and anoint thyself." According to *J. Ber.* 2:7, they are forbidden because they give pleasure. By the same token, if the mourner is unusually dirty and washes only for the purpose of cleansing himself, but not for pleasure, this is permitted.

d) "*Use of the /conjugal/ bed*": i.e. marital relations. This is derived from II Sam. 12:24, concerning David and Bathsheba. The passage implies that she was forbidden to him prior to the end of the mourning period. A mourner may not marry a wife during the mourning period, even if he does not physically consummate the marriage. Betrothal, however, is permitted.⁷

e) "*Wearing of shoes*", which is derived from Ezekiel 24:17: "And thy shoes shalt thou place on thy feet," which, for the Rabbis, implies that this is permissible only to Ezekiel, because he is a priest, but is forbidden to all other mourners.⁸

f) "*Working*", based on Amos 8:10: "And I will turn thy festivals into mourning." Just as a festival has in it a prohibition against work, so also is a mourner prohibited to work.

g) "*Study of Scripture*", based on the same passage in Ezekiel. *J. MK* 3:5 derives this prohibition from Job 2:13, "'And does not speak a word to him:' even a word of Scripture."

h) "*Sitting on a bed or couch*". This is based on II Sam: 13:31, where it is said of King David that "the King rose up and tore his clothes and lay on the ground." Additional support is in Job 2:13: "And they sat with him on the ground."⁹ It is interesting that there is no requirement to sit on the ground: the mourner may walk or stand constantly. But if he does sit, it is not to be on a regular bed or chair, but on the ground, or on a low stool. Related to this is the requirement to *overturn the bed*, based on Bar Kappara's dictum:

The Lord says, I have set the likeness of mine image on them, and because of their sins have I upset it; let your couches therefore be overturned on account thereof.

That is to say, man has distorted his divine image by sinning, and man's sin has brought on death.¹⁰ As an act of mourning, he does not sleep in the normal manner.

6. Cf. II Sam. 14:2: "... mourn ... do not anoint with oil. . . ." and Is. 61:3: "... oil of joy in place of mourning. . . ."

7. *MK* 15b; 23a.

8. *Ibid.*, 15b, 20b; see also II Sam. 15:30.

9. See *MK* 15b, 15a, 21a (and 28b according to the reading of Maimonides), for the sources of these practices.

10. *MK* 15b, with the reading of Rashi; cf. *J. MK* 3:5; and *J. Ber.* 3:1; "Bar Kappara says, A beautiful image did I have in your house, and you caused me to upset it; so also must you upset your bed." *J. Ber.* 3:1 offers another reason: "Why does he sleep in an overturned bed? So that he should be awake all night and be reminded that he is

i) *Muffling of the head* is now prescribed; that is, the mourner must cover his head and most of his face with a kerchief. Known as *pri'at ha-rosh*, this is based on Ezekiel 24:17, which implies that a non-priest must wrap his head. The purpose here is evidently to make the mourner look like a broken and humbled man.¹¹

j) The mourner is prohibited from giving a *greeting of well-being*. Literally, he may not "ask one's peace," as in Gen. 24:6: "Is it peace with him? It is peace." This, too, is based on Ez. 24:17: *he'aneh dom*—"sigh in silence." The mourner may not give or receive greetings for the first three days of mourning.

In addition to the above restrictions, the mourner has one further one—and, for our purposes, a very significant one. He may not offer a sacrifice for seven days. "R. Simon says, the *shlamim* sacrifice [is offered] at a time when he is *shalem* (i.e., "complete") and not at a time when he is on *onen*."¹² Tosefta Zeb. 11 states, "An *onen* is not permitted to bring a sacrifice for the entire seven day period."¹³

The mourning laws, it is submitted here, are a concrete manifestation of the Judaic view of death; namely, that death desacralizes man because it is the end of the dynamic interaction with God which can take place only in life. Death removes man from an intimate relationship with God; he can no longer serve Him, he can no longer perform the *Mizvot*, he no longer possesses the *nishmat hayyim* which is the distinguishing characteristic of the human being.

What of the surviving, living mourner, who alone among the living now knows what it is to experience the end of life and the termination of a meaningful relationship with God? In effect, the law asks the mourner to behave as if he, himself, were dead. He is now an incomplete person, and his daily life begins to reflect the fact of his incompleteness. His physical appearance and his body are neglected. His relationship with God is interrupted. He has no commonality or community with other men. The qualities and characteristics of a living human being are suspended. According to the Midrash, death is one of the aspects of hu-

a mourner." It is important to note, incidentally, that the concept of *death as affecting the divine image in man* is a key concept in the laws of mourning. The current Jewish practice of covering the mirrors in a house of mourning is a substitute for "overturning the bed." The connections between the mirror and the divine image in man are obvious.

11. See also II Sam. 15:30; Jer. 14:4; Esther 6:12.

12. MK 15a.

13. Cf. Maimonides, "Laws of Entering the Sanctuary," 2:11. For discussions on the significance of the number seven in mourning rites, see A. Kapelrud, "The Number Seven in Ugaritic Texts," *V.T.* 18 (1968), p. 495f., who points to seven as the number of completeness, of fate, indefiniteness, danger, intensity; see also E. C. Kingsbury, "A Seven Day Ritual in the Old Babylonian Cult at Larsa," *HUCA* 34 (1963) pp. 1-34; on the role of seven and other numbers in the Judaic tradition, cf. Y. Heinemann, "Ta'amei Hamitzvot," *Hamador Hadati*, I, p. 68f.; cf. also U. Cassuto's article in *Tarbiz* 13, pp. 206-207.

man life which likens man to a beast.¹⁴ In death, man has witnessed the ultimate opposite of life, of God, and of man, and he cannot now summarily leave death behind him and return quickly and easily into the land of the living. He knows now what it is to be without the breath of the God of life, and he can return to normal life and to renewed contact with the sacred only by degrees.

In a word, the mourner must now live as an alien between the two worlds of life and death, moving imperceptibly from the defiled land of *tum'ah* and death back towards sanctity and life.¹⁵

A careful examination of the specifics of the mourning legislation indicates that the laws would have the mourner react and behave in a manner consistent with that death force which he has just experienced. He has been touched by the anti-life, and, therefore, he himself becomes less life-like, less complete as a being. His brush with death causes him, at least for the moment, to lose his identity as a person and as a human. For, just as death separates man from God, so it also separates man from the fraternity and community of other men, and separates man from his essential self, from his essence as a person. In the face of death, man as a person, as an identity, as a being, as a living creature, as the image of God, ceases to exist. The rites of mourning are a physical expression of the essential facts of death. Thus, the mourner, in his conduct, is de-vitalized, de-personalized, de-identified in his normal relationships and connections.¹⁶

Therefore, he who has been involved with death and *tum'ah* refrains from participating in those aspects of life which express a relationship and connection with God, or fellow man, or himself. His essence as a person has been diminished and, thus, he does not cut his hair, for the cutting of hair is a sign of a man's concern with his person. (The Rabbis declare that an Israelite king was required to cut his hair daily, in order to maintain his dignity.¹⁷) The mourner allows his hair to grow untended and uncared for; there is no concern now with his physical is-ness.

For the same reason he allows his garments to become unclean. And at the moment of death and at the burial he rends the garment he is wearing—and wears that rent garment during the mourning period. Garments and man's concern with them are manifestations of the fully

14. *Genesis Rabba* 8:11.

15. This goes somewhat beyond Pedersen's view of Israelite mourning practice, in which the mourning family is aware of the discord in its life and places itself outside of normal life, as is true "in all cases where people are brought face to face with unhappiness and sorrow" which removes man from normal community. Cf. J. Pedersen, *Israel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), I-II, p. 494ff. Pedersen, in general, is extremely sensitive to the profound issue of mourning.

16. G. von Rad refers to death as "diminished form of human existence." See his *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper Bros., 1960), I, p. 369.

17. *Taanit* 17a.

living. For example, it is said of R. Yoḥanan that he referred to his clothes as “my dignifiers.”¹⁸ That is, clothing dignifies and honors the wearer. As one who is now temporarily stripped of the dignity and honor of being a person, the mourner rends the symbol of this dignity. Further, as a manifestation of his status as a non-person, he does not anoint or wash himself.

His is-ness as a person has been reduced, his identity as a person has melted away, and he has no marital relations—which have the potential of creating a new life and a new identity, nor may he take a new wife.

His essence as a man has been decreased, and he walks barefoot, without shoes, in common with the beasts. *Shabbat* 152a reports that a Saducee once saw R. Joshua without shoes and said, “One who is dead is better off than one who goes without shoes.”¹⁹

He has been depersonalized, and may not engage in work,²⁰ since work sustains his life and is a manifestation of his person and of his connection with himself and with others.

He has been touched by desacralizing death and *tum'ah*, and he may not study Torah which is called *torat ḥayyim*—“the Torah of Life”—(Prov. 3:2, 3:18; 4:22; 9:11)—and which is an aspect of God and which connects man with Him and His sacredness.²¹

He has a diminished identity as a person and he does not sit, in the accepted mode of persons, on a chair or couch. He sits on the ground.

Because of the same consideration he refrains from sleeping in the normal mode: He “overturns the couch,” and, as we have noted above, the reason for this is the concept of *demut diyukni nataṭi bakhem*—“my image have I implanted in you.”²² The image of God within man has been affected by death. That is to say, once again, that death and *tum'ah* have “de-imagized” man who was created in the image. By virtue of his contact with death and *tum'ah*, the *demut diyukni*—“the form of my image”—that which makes the essential man, has been diminished. Overturning or inverting the bed during the mourning period is a symbol of

18. *Shabb.* 113a.

19. On the subject of shoes as symbols of man's dignity, see also *Shabb.* 129a and Rashi *ad loc.*; *Shabb.* 114a; *Ber.* 43b; *Pes.* 112a, 113b; *Yoma* 78b; *Ket.* 64b, 65b. The surviving brother who refuses to fulfill his levirate marriage obligations to the widow of his brother must undergo a *ḥalizah* ceremony (Dt. 25:5-11; Yeb. 12:1). As part of the rites, the widow “comes nigh unto him in the presence of the elders, and pulls his shoe from off his foot.” In the light of the significance of the shoe, is it possible that the removal of the shoe is an attempt to strip him, at least symbolically, of his dignity as a man, since he has refused to take on the obligation of levirate marriage?

20. Particularly during the first three days of mourning.

21. See also *Mishnah Avot* 6:7, where Torah is equated with life. Cf. *Exodus Rabba* 51:8: “‘Engraved—*ḥarut*—on the tablets’ (Ex. 32:16), R. Nehemiah says, Read rather ‘*ḥerut*’—‘free’—free from the Angel of Death;” that is, Torah frees from death. Cf. also *ibid.*, 33.

22. *MK* 15b.

this depersonalization. "Turn over the middle-man (the bed on which life is conceived)," says the Talmud.²³

For a similar reason, he does not prepare his own first meal following the burial. He has no relationship to himself and, at least at this one moment, he symbolically possesses no food. Only a fully living person prepares his own food. He may, if he desires, fast. But if he wishes to eat, the food must be prepared by others. And the menu must include such foods which remind him of the "non-person" condition in which he finds himself.²⁴

Further depersonalization takes place. The head and face are covered. In effect, the mourner says: I do not exist; I am not I; I am an alien in the land of the living.

Because he is not "I," he may not offer greetings—*sh'elat shalom* (literally, "asking of peace")—to his fellow man, nor may others offer greetings to him. He remains silent. Only a person, only an identity, can greet and be greeted in return. And *shalom*—the traditional greeting—is a symbol of community and fraternity.²⁵ It is significant that *shalom* is also considered to be one of the appellations of the deity, according to *Shabb.* 10b: "*Shalom* is the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He."²⁶ According to some opinions, greeting a mourner is permitted as long as the word *shalom* is not mentioned in the context of "peace unto you." According to these opinions, at least, the desacralizing aspects of death and mourning are now clearly manifested: not only is *shalom* avoided because of its connotations of peace, perfection, community, and fraternity—of which the mourner is a direct opposite; *shalom* is avoided because of its additional connotations of the sacred, from which the mourner is now estranged.

In sum, the mourner is a diminished person, one who has been

23. *J. MK* 3:5, 83a; *MK* 15b. On the general subject of sexual abstinence during mourning, see Norman Brown, *Life Against Death* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1957), pp. 112ff.; Effie Bendan, *Death Customs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), pp. 133, 235f., and H. Kelsen, *Society and Nature* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 163–64: to the primitives, there is a connection between the sex act and death, and one may die during procreation unless there are proper safeguards; A. Lods, *op. cit.*, p. 271: the spirits of the act of birth should have no contact with the spirits of the dead.

That the sex act may have been the first cause of death in the world is alluded to in several Rabbinic sources, which maintain that Adam's sin was connected with the sex act. Cf. *Gen. R.* 18:6; *Cantillations Rabba* 4:4; *Shabb.* 145b; *A.Z.* 22b; *Yeb.* 103b.

For more recent treatment of this subject, see Robert Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *JBL* 76 (1957), pp. 123–38; see also *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, 52 (1936), pp. 86–94 on this same theme.

24. *BB* 16b: "Why are lentils proper food for mourners? As the lentil rolls, so does mourning roll from one person to the next. As the lentil is silent (without a cleft opening), so is the mourner silent." Eggs are also mentioned as a proper mourning food.

25. For a contemporary discussion, within a different context, of the community aspects of the word *shalom*, see E. C. Bianchi, *Reconciliation* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 7.

26. See also *Judges* 6:24.

touched by the anti-life of *tum'ah*, and he sits in rent garments, on the ground, without shoes, unkempt, unwashed; he engages neither in work nor in study of Torah; his head and face are covered, he greets and recognizes no one and, in turn, is greeted and recognized by no one.²⁸ And since he has experienced the desacralizing force of death, the mourner may not offer up a sacrifice for seven days.

The laws of the *onen*—the initial period of mourning immediately following death but prior to burial—offer further support for the concept of death as estranger from God. For example: the *onen* is exempt from the wearing of phylacteries; he does not recite the benediction before or after meals; he may not repeat the *amen* when he hears the benediction;²⁹ he does not recite the normally obligatory *Shma* prayer; he is exempted from all positive Biblical precepts;³⁰ and, based on Lev. 10:19, a priest who is an *onen* is forbidden to eat of sacred food.³¹

It is precisely while the mourner is an *onen* and is existentially experiencing death at first hand that the *halakhah* exempts him from performing the precepts. When death enters, man's relationship with the divine is temporarily suspended.

The rigorous *halakhah* of mourning thus underscores, paradoxically, the heavy Judaic stress on life, and on man's constant relationship with God, community, and himself. The dynamic interaction with God can take place only in the context of life; "the dead do not praise the Lord" (Ps. 115:); the *mizvot* cannot be performed in a state of non-life. Death desacralizes man and estranges him from the divine. The mourning *halakhah* prescribes a process of depersonalization and estrangement which is consistent with the estranging quality of death. Just as the dead are cut off from dynamic communion with God and community, so is the mourner required to behave in a similar manner—since he, alone, among the living, has most intimately experienced the estrangement of death. In his conduct he refrains from participating in those aspects of life which express a relationship and connection with God, or fellow man, or with himself as a being.

27. See C. N. Denburg, ed., *Code of Hebrew Law: Yoreh De'ah* (Montreal: Jurisprudence Press, 1954), p. 300, n. 11, for a discussion of greeting the mourner and *shalom*.

28. *Ibid.*, par. 390, pp. 316ff., contains a full listing of the acts of body care prohibited to the mourner.

29. *J. Ber.* 3:1.

30. *Ber.* 17b; cf. *Yoreh De'ah* 341:1.

31. *Horayot* 12b; Maimonides, *Yad Hazakah*, "Laws of Entering the Sanctuary," 2:8; *Yalkut Shimoni* 533; cf. also Hosea 9:4: *k'lehem onim*—"as the bread of mourners."

Is the Synagogue Becoming a Church, The Rabbi a Priest?

Religious and Secular Aspects of Jewish Community

HENRY SIEGMAN

IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE IN SOME PARTS OF the Jewish community—including, oddly enough, certain quarters of the rabbinate—to level the charge of “clericalism” against the religious establishment.

Jewish religious leadership, it is maintained by these critics, while preaching “Judaism is more than religion,” is actually practicing “Judaism is religion only.” Unique circumstances have projected American Judaism as an equal partner in a three-faith corporation of Protestant, Catholic, Jew. In their desire to exploit this situation, synagogues are assuming the role of churches and rabbis are transforming themselves into priests. They are accused of tampering with the historic character of the Synagogue, of the rabbinate, and of the *kehillah*, the traditional Jewish community, which embraced all of life and did not distinguish between the religious and the secular. Furthermore, this “un-Jewish” dichotomy between the religious and the secular is being asserted at the very moment when Christians, in their quest for a rediscovery of the Jewish roots of Christianity, are abandoning their old hostility to the secular world.

The charge of clericalism and the arguments for the “uniqueness” of Judaism are pressed most often by secular Jewish organizations, particularly those which have a large investment in interfaith activities. Until recently, their claims to spokesmanship vis-à-vis the Church went largely unchallenged, for Jewish religious organizations approached the inter-religious enterprise with considerable ambivalence and caution. (Thus, while representatives of several defense agencies were busily engaged in lobbying in Rome during Vatican II, religious organizations refused to become similarly involved.) More recently, however, Jewish religious organizations have shown a new—if still qualified—openness to certain inter-religious relationships, while spokesmen for both the Protestant and Catholic Church have shown a decided preference for dealing with the Synagogue and the rabbinate. In response to this challenge, professional Jewish ecumenists with the secular organizations have been impressing on Church leaders that the Synagogue is not the counterpart of the Church, and that to limit Judaism to the sphere of religion is a distortion of its true character.

One could observe that even if this argument were granted, it cer-

HENRY SIEGMAN is Executive Vice-President of The Synagogue Council of America.

tainly does not follow that rabbis and synagogues suffer some special disability which makes them *less* qualified than secular organizations to speak for the Jewish community. By sheer numbers alone, if nothing else, the Synagogue organizations are vastly more representative than are the defense agencies. Indeed, the Synagogue constitutes the only genuine grass roots institution in American Jewish life.

Furthermore, one could also observe that it is the secular organizations which are themselves most guilty of the sin they attribute to the religious organizations. If their argument against the preeminence of the Rabbi and the Synagogue is that Judaism does not recognize the distinction between the religious and the secular, then why the need for special interreligious departments within their organizations to be in charge of relations with the Church? Apparently, when they speak to the Church (or, for that matter, to society at large and to governmental agencies) they assume a religious face and unabashedly take advantage of the perquisites that accrue from the three-faith mythos.

Institutional considerations aside, it remains to deal with the substance of the charges, particularly since they have a very strong surface appeal. Everyone recognizes that Judaism *is* different, that its notion of religion is unlike that of the Church, that the realm of the secular was never consigned to the devil in Jewish thinking, and that the rabbinate never exercised a sacramental role. These feelings were summarized not long ago in an editorial in the *Reconstructionist* magazine: "In our vocabulary," the editorial declares "secular agencies are religious, they perform *mizvot*, they serve to channel Jews' sense of moral responsibility to their neighbors. Just because Jews are identified with 'religious'—in the category of Catholics and Protestants—is no reason to overlook the uniqueness of Jewish existence. Jewry is not a church, but a people with a culture and a civilization."

There is something attractive about these words. And yet, they could not be more misrepresentative of the reality of Judaism, of its authentic worldview and self-understanding.

What follows is an attempt to delineate the fundamentals of the historical Jewish community and its ideological foundations, a task which in a time of radical institutions and ideological dislocation is of more than academic interest.

Synagogue and Community

A good place to begin such an inquiry is at the actual beginning, i.e., the historical origins of the Jewish community. As Salo W. Baron states, in his classic three-volume study of the Jewish community, these origins are to be traced to the Synagogue. More accurately, they go back to the religious gatherings that were held by the Jewish exiles in Babylonia. The term used for these meetings, *edah*, originally meaning simply

a gathering, "came to be identified only with a worshipful gathering of Jews."¹ These gatherings, at first convened for the purpose of worship and religious instruction, gave their attention increasingly to the social needs of the community as well. Thus, "from its inception, the Synagogue was more than a mere sanctuary. . . It served everywhere as the center of all communal and many private affairs."² Synagogue and community became identical—so much so that congregational officers, as a matter of course, served as officers of the community as well. The *rosh haknesset* (archisynagogus) was at the same time the chief of the Synagogue and of the community. The same was true of the other Synagogue officials, the secretary (*sofer*) and the *hazzan* (who, unlike his modern namesake, was an assistant to the *rosh haknesset*). It was to the Synagogue, therefore, that the Jew turned, not only for worship, but also for social relationships and communal needs. For the Jewish people who emerged from the great crisis of exile stripped of state and territory, the Synagogue became the focal institution of their lives and the new instrument for national survival.

Given this identity of community and Synagogue, it is not surprising that the promotion of religion, with all that it embraced in the way of worship, education and judicial action "towered above all other (communal) activities." The community, thus, assumed an essentially religious character, which received powerful reinforcement from the fact that the traditional community's authority rested on its religious courts, the *battei din*. Indeed, religious alliance became "the main criterion of Jewishness and of membership in the Jewish community."³

Baron observes that, though the term Synagogue came to mean a Jewish house of worship, just as in Christianity *Ecclesia* came to connote a Christian place of worship, both terms "retained also their original significance, inasmuch as the Synagogue and Church continue to represent the aggregate of their respective communities."⁴ *Indeed, the use of the term Synagogue to connote the total community and as a symbol of Jewish life and unity has no greater historical justification than in Judaism.*

The Role of the Rabbi

With the disappearance of the active priesthood and the downfall of Sadduceeism, rabbis and scribes made "insistent claims to exclusive leadership in public life." The rabbinic leadership that emanated from the Talmudic centers in Palestine and Babylonia was heeded throughout the Jewish world. There developed a submissiveness to this leadership

1. Salo Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure, to the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1942), Vol. I, p. 61.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 87.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 124.

4 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 87.

“greater than ever greeted the edicts of kings and high priests who ruled in Zion.”⁵

An early practice of using lay judges in certain legal proceedings—a practice which might have strengthened the principle of lay religious leadership—was discontinued in the face of the growing complexity of the rabbinic legal structure. Lay judges were replaced by permanent judges, qualified through rabbinic ordination, which they received from central rabbinic authorities. As religion embraced with increasing exclusivity all walks of Jewish life, ordained judges gradually assumed functions going far beyond the administration of justice. “Soon they become the main leaders of the community, rivaling or exceeding elective officers in power, where they did not altogether replace such officials by their own appointees.”⁶

In theory, at least, there existed some sort of distinction between municipal and religious responsibilities. Nevertheless, rabbinic scholars increasingly asserted themselves in the former area as well, and served as members of municipal councils in Roman Palestine. To be sure, this was resisted by the lay leaders, but they were unable to halt rabbinic supremacy in Palestine, and even less so in Babylonia.

Rabbinic hegemony raises serious questions about the democratic character of Jewish communal leadership. Here Baron offers a pertinent insight:

Although not democratic in the modern electoral sense, rabbinic leadership cut across class and party lines and was, in some respects, more truly representative of the masses of the population than many an elective body. With forceful insistence, the talmudic sages opened wide to members of all social classes the gates to their own class, the aristocracy of learning.⁷

Rabbinic supremacy had first become a reality with the establishment of the Palestinian Patriarchate, which exercised supreme authority over the Jews of the Roman Empire. The patriarch (*Nasi*), as the recognized chief of world Jewry, appointed and deposed communal officers in Palestine and in the Dispersion. The Babylonian Exilarchate (*Resh Galuta*), which came into its own after the decline of the Patriarchate early in the fifth century, had more of the aura of a hereditary monarchy than that of a rabbinic office. Nevertheless, it, too, was essentially a religious office, as is suggested by the title, *Rabbana*, by which the exilarch was addressed.

The power of both Exilarchate and Patriarchate found its limitations only in the prestige and authority of the rabbis at the leading Talmudical academies. In describing this phenomenon, Baron remarks that “the grandeur of the political as well as spiritual power wielded . . . by a number of rabbis gathered around certain more or less permanent

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 117.

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 129.

7. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 135

seats of learning is really amazing.”⁸ These Talmudic sages welded Jewish life into a common pattern which was to last until the breakup of the ghetto in modern times. Centered in the Synagogue and the *bet hamidrash*, “the Jewish community was eminently equipped for its subsequent struggle for survival. . .” Not until the industrial revolution and the rise of modern science “was the pharasaic-rabbinic doctrine and way of life discarded or even modified in any essentials. The Jewish communities of seventeenth century Frankfurt or Cracow . . . bore an uncanny resemblance to those of Tiberias and Nehardea at the beginning of the third century.”⁹

A brief survey of Jewish history following the post-Talmudic period reveals that, in Spain, rabbis held high rank in all communal councils and thoroughly dominated the courts. Italy, characterized by lay supremacy, was an exception. Yet, even here, “the rabbi remained the intellectual leader, the preserver of historic continuity and interterritorial integrity, and, hence, the chief protagonist in the drama of Jewish communal survival.” In Franco-Germany, England and Poland, “rabbis were from all angles the leaders in communal matters.” In Poland, however, questions of civil law were in the hands of lay elders.

To summarize, rabbinic leadership was always recognized in the traditional *kehillah*—in the breach no less than in practice. “No matter how many powers the communal plutocracy concentrated in its own hands, no matter how well it succeeded in making local rabbis and other officials subservient to its needs, the theoretical precedence of the scholar remained uncontested.”¹⁰ It is in this uncontested leadership of the rabbinate that “the religious, educational and judicial control of the community had reached its climax. . . It was in the great elasticity, uniformity and continuity of this leadership that were focalized all the centripetal forces of the community.”¹¹

Judaism and Christianity

In the light of the historical record, it is clear that many of the popular distinctions that are made between Judaism and Christianity are inaccurate. To be sure, there do exist real and important differences. There is no ecclesiastic authority in Judaism—hierarchically structured or otherwise (the hierarchical character of the ecclesiastic structure of the Church, almost always emphasized in these polemics, is not the relevant distinction)—which mediates the encounter between divinity and humanity, as there is in classical Christianity. (The validity of even this limited assertion must be qualified by an explanation of the role of the Temple priest-

8. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 150.

9. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 156.

10. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 181.

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 243.

hood in the area of worship and of the *zaddik* in Hasidic Judaism.) However, precisely because religion in Judaism is not limited to the human-divine encounter in the formal act of worship, but is expressed in the larger area of societal existence as well; that is to say, because Judaism, unlike Christianity, finds its fullest expression in a comprehensive system of religious legislation (*halakhah*) rather than in sacraments, the preeminence of the rabbinate, as the authoritative interpreter of the *halakhah*, was clearly recognized. While the internal hierarchical character of this authority was never clearly defined, its effective preeminence was never in doubt.

It should be noted that, in Palestine, there existed a clear hierarchical line of religious authority, from the local three-man *bet din* to the twenty-one man *sanhedriah ketanah* to the seventy-one man *sanhedriah gedolah*. Furthermore, the supreme authority of the local *marah d'atrah* is clearly established in Jewish law. As Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, states, rabbinic authority derives not from wisdom and learning alone, but from communal appointment. "As expressed so forcefully in the incident on fixing the date of Yom Kippur, a Rabbi Joshua, however superior his scholarship, must submit to the rulings and decrees of a Rabbi Gamliel as the practicing office holder. There can be no substitute for a challenge to an official and legitimate incumbent of a rabbinical post."¹²

From the above it should be clear that if by "clericalism" is meant the leadership of the rabbinate in every area of communal life, then Jewish history is an unbroken record of clericalism, in spite of the popular notion that "Judaism is inherently an anti-clerical religion." The role of the priest, of the Patriarchate and Exilarchate, and of the rabbinate in the various *kehillot* until the Enlightenment cannot be understood in any other terms.

The difficulties created by the term clericalism are, ultimately, of a semantic nature. These semantic problems must not be allowed to obscure a central fact. If there is an irreducible imperative that emerges from Jewish history, it is that communal structures and leadership—be they lay or rabbinic—have always been based on the preeminence of religious purpose and commitment. In the struggle for power between layman and rabbi in various periods of Jewish history, the issue was never "the role of religion." Laymen, no less than rabbis, could not conceive of a basis or purpose for the *kehillah* other than a religious one, i.e., the working out of God's will in the daily life of *knesset yisroel*.

This point comes through with particular force in Jacob Katz's excellent work on the *kehillah*, *Tradition and Crisis—Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, where he stresses that the competition between

12. Immanuel Jakobovits, "Survey of Recent Halakhic Periodical Literature," *Tradition*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 74–75.

rabbinic and lay leadership, which at times characterized organized Jewish life, must not obscure the fact that the kehillah was governed by the principles of religious law, which laymen championed no less than did the rabbi. In this they shared a common objective: "the (lay) wardens assisted in ensuring the dominance of religion in public life; and they were assisted by the rabbis, the paramount representatives of religion, in maintaining the regulations in other spheres"¹³

Defining Judaism

For those who oppose what they see as the self-aggrandizing role of the Synagogue, the central ideological issue is that Judaism, unlike Christianity, is more than religion. The implication of this assertion is clearly that religion does not define Judaism, and that religion is, therefore, *less than Judaism*, for *Judaism includes culture, nationalism, ethnicity, and other such "civilizational" components in addition to religion.*

To be sure, everyone may define Judaism in any way that is personally meaningful. It will be granted, however, that an historical definition of Judaism, no matter how difficult to arrive at, should not depend on anyone's personal values and beliefs. Furthermore, any redefinition that flies in the face of the mainstream of tradition and history—while it may be an action to which individuals are impelled by their own thinking and conscience—amounts to a rejection of that history and tradition and of the continuing identity which that tradition developed.

If, historically, the term Judaism did not suffer the limitations of the Christian concept of religion, this was not because Judaism includes elements other than religion, but rather because the Jewish concept of *religion* encompasses areas not included in Christianity. While, in Christianity, religion classically pertained to the spirit life of the individual, as distinguished from his societal concerns, in Judaism it extended to both. In other words—culture, ethnicity, nationalism are all concepts that in Judaism are very much a part of *religion*. Those who argue against this notion, and insist that these various components are not part of religion, but elements of a larger civilization entity called Judaism, of which religion is but one element, are limiting religion to worship in the synagogue, to dogma and to ritual. It is therefore they, and not religionists, who are adopting Christian categories in defining the Jewish concept of religion.

The Secular and the Holy

Because Judaism did not distinguish between the spiritual life of the individual and his societal concerns, there are those who conclude that what distinguishes Judaism is its championing of the secular society.

13. Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis—Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 126.

They argue, therefore, that it would be unforgivable if, at the moment that progressive Christian theology has discovered the secular city, the Synagogue should create a dichotomy between religious and secular areas of life.

Actually, what has, in fact, distinguished Judaism is its preoccupation with every aspect of life in society, *not with the secular quality of that life*. Indeed, in its societal orientation, Judaism always had a very specific direction and goal: to sanctify that life and to imbue its very aspect with holiness; in other words, to transform it from a secular to a sacred one. Rabbi Abraham Kook noted that Judaism knows only of the holy and the "not-yet-holy." In its effort to shape reality, Judaism "stands opposed to the secular movements which deprived the real world of transcendental meaning even more radically than to those religions which draw a sharp line between faith and the actual world."¹⁴

Judaism never suffered a secularist dimension, and the issue of secularism never distinguished it from Christianity. In its profoundest sense, religion in Judaism is precisely what it is in Christianity—only more so, as it were, for, unlike Christianity, the quest for salvation in Judaism always encompassed the broader area of the individual's life in society.

It has already been pointed out that the modern Jewish habit of disparaging the inward value of faith—a phenomenon not unrelated to that of Jewish secularism—is probably largely an unconscious defense mechanism in the face of the Christian challenge. There is nothing authentically Jewish in such an attitude; clearly, "there is no performance of mitzvot without Jewish faith."¹⁵

The direction of the new Christian theology is antithetical to Judaism no less than to traditional Christianity. It seeks to desacralize religion through an accommodation to secular reality, and asserts that, in our modern technological age, man no longer lives his daily life with reference to transcendental goals and values. His life in society is self-contained and self-sufficient in a very material sense; God is no longer invoked in the life of modern society. As Cox states, in *The Secular City*, secularization represents a movement to bypass religion and to go on to other things. "It has convinced the believer that he could be wrong . . . and that there are more important things than dying for the faith." In the secular city, religion provides for few "an inclusive and commanding system of personal and cosmic values and explanations." The new theology celebrates this state of affairs; secularism is seen as a fulfillment of Christianity.

Of course, the Jew owes much to secular liberalism. It produced democracy and his political emancipation. Moreover, there is an impor-

14. Nathan Rotenstreich, "Judaism in the World of Our Day," *Forum*, Vol. IV, *Proceedings of the Jerusalem Ideological Conference* (Jerusalem, 1959), p. 50.

15. R.J.Z. Werblowsky, "A Note on the Relations Between Judaism and Christianity," *Forum*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 54-59.

tant sense in which Judaism is out-of-phase with Christianity and very much in phase with secular liberalism. Traditional Christianity holds a profoundly pessimistic view of man and society. Its principal theme is an infinite separation of evil man, in a world of sin and death, from a just God. The chasm is finally bridged only by Jesus. By contrast, Judaism's optimistic view of man and society is far more congenial to the optimism of modern secularism and its faith in education, science and technology.

However, this congeniality obscures a critical difference. Jewish optimism is rooted in a transcendent Creator who fashioned man in His image, who addresses him, and who also stands in judgment over him. Secular liberal optimism is rooted in man himself, and is thus always in danger of being transmuted into an *avodah zarah*, into idolatry. Emil Fackenheim expressed the skepticism of the post-Auschwitz Jew when he asks whether a secular liberalism that reigns supreme can be counted upon to remain liberal. Can it be counted on to respect the Jew's right to his Jewishness? Might it even be perverted into a demonic tyranny that denies the Jew's very humanity?

In any event, for the Jew, the new theology isn't really all that new. The Haskalah literature is full of the death of God and of religion because we have reached the age of science. Our Yiddishists and Hebraists substituted culture for religion, Zionists enshrined nationalism, and Bundists championed socialism. While all of these movements have their admirable qualities, none could have seen the light of day except for generations who lived as devout religious Jews.

The American Experience

Admittedly, a meaningful contemporary definition of Synagogue and community must take into account not only Jewish history, but ever-changing realities. This brings us to the role of the Synagogue under the new conditions of American Jewish life. Salo Baron, for one, does not discern any radical divergencies. "In Western Europe and America, the religious factor has retained its preeminent position in the scale of communal values . . . *the religious congregation has been the mainstay of all organized Jewish life*"¹⁶ (emphasis added). Indeed, the evolution of community from, and its identity with, the Synagogue on these shores was virtually identical with the development of communal institutions in Babylonia.

From its very inception, American Jewish life centered around the Synagogue. The first Sefardim who came here in the middle 1600's set about reconstituting the European-type religious community to which they were accustomed. "Its central institution on these shores was the synagogue."¹⁷

16. Baron, *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 4.

17. Jacob R. Marcus, "Background for the History of American Jewry," in *The Ameri-*

"Before 1820, the disciplined synagogue-community had claimed—indeed demanded—the loyalty of all Americans who called themselves Jews. . . . Since 1820, . . . American Jewry has been held together, if not by the synagogue, then by socio-cultural bonds and by the nourishing influences of a powerful subterranean current of religion and religious institutions."¹⁸

Daniel Elazar observes that even though the identity of Synagogue and community which had existed in early American Jewish life no longer obtained after the large wave of immigration from Central Europe, Jewish organizational life continued to be basically congregational. Though social service and educational institutions were nominally independent, "In fact, however, they tended to be dominated by leaders of particular congregations wearing different hats."¹⁹

It is interesting to note that the very earliest and, according to some observers, the closest approach which American Jewry has ever made to a national representative body was the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which did not start out as a Reform institution, but sought to represent and speak for all American Jews. "Through its Board of Delegates it reached beyond purely congregational concerns into the areas of defense and relief, and even attempted to settle the early East European immigrants in colonies on the Western plains"²⁰

What impact has the centrality of the Synagogue had on the self-image of American Jews? The sociologist, Bezalel Sherman, reports that:

All surveys and population studies that deal with the attitudes of the Jews towards their group existence in this country report that the Jews regard themselves as constituting primarily a religious community, *whose ethnic character stems from the fact that the Jewish religion is the faith of the Jewish people exclusively*. . . (emphasis added) The new Jewish generation accepts the concept of Jewish peoplehood but it cannot comprehend a Jewishness that is completely divorced from the Jewish religion. Jews regard the Synagogue as the center of Jewish identification and see it as the institution in which American patterns of living and the search for Jewish self-expression converge.²¹

I propose that it is time, finally, to lay to rest a shibboleth that has been part of the conventional intellectual baggage of all observers of the American-Jewish scene, professional sociologists and amateurs alike, that Judaism, defined in predominantly religious terms, is a "churchy" phenomenon, the result of an accommodation to the three-faith syndrome of American society. Of course, one does violence to the traditional character of Judaism by limiting it to matters of faith. *But that is begging*

can Jew, A Reappraisal, edited by Oscar I. Janowsky (New York and London: Harper Bros., 1942), p. 5.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

19. Daniel Elazar, "Dynamics of the American Jewish Community," JUDAISM, Summer 1971, p. 337.

20. Marcus, *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

21. C. Bezalel Sherman, "Demographic and Social Aspects," in *The American Jew*, p. 47.

the question, for that is not what a religious definition of Judaism does. Quite the contrary, it broadens the purview of religious faith to embrace all aspects of life in society.

It is time that religious leaders stopped apologizing for their "accommodation" to the notion of Judaism as one of the three great faiths. It is those whose definition of Judaism empties that concept of the centrality of faith and of its all-embraciveness who are, in fact, accommodating themselves to secular realities in a way that totally distorts the historic character of Judaism.

To the extent that the new secular orientation of Christianity seeks to infuse general societal concerns with religious meaning and purpose, it approximates the traditional Jewish definition of religion. To the extent that this new orientation denudes life of transcendental meaning, as it all too often does, it could not be more hostile to Judaism.

The traditional definition of Judaism and of Jewish community does not argue for rabbinic hegemony. It does argue for the preeminence of religious character and purpose in our communal institutions and leadership. It is fatuous to argue that our secular defense agencies embody this character and purpose. They do not. Neither they, nor the social service agencies, invoke Jewish religious commitment and values on their own merit, or use them as the basis of their activities. Their orientation has been, and remains, a secularist one.*

One interesting aspect of the secularist orientation is the subtle way in which these agencies have historically misapplied the Church-State separation principle to eliminate religious influence from American public life—as distinguished from the institutions of government. This they have done on the assumption that Jews are most secure in a secularized society in which religious differences are least visible. (Of course, within the past year or two, all Jewish organizations seem to have joined the bandwagon of ethnic assertiveness. Whatever the motivation, it is clear that it is not the result of a religious renaissance.)

Such a view is wholly antithetical to traditional Jewish values. A policy aimed at weakening the influence of religion on society—in its public no less than its private manifestations—is a perversion of Judaism. Furthermore, the assumption that a Jew would not stand out in a secularized society is based on a conception of religion as a compartmentalized aspect of life, something to be expressed only in the privacy of a person's home and synagogue. It should be clear that nothing could be as foreign to Judaism as such a view. The distinctiveness of a religious Jew should be most strikingly conspicuous in a secular setting.

* Only recently, one of the major Jewish defense agencies sponsored a Conference on "Political Violence" jointly with Catholic University. The Conference was held on the Sabbath! One may be certain that this Jewish organization would not have scheduled the Conference on a day that might offend Catholic sensibilities. Their intensive involvement in ecumenical activities, no doubt, sensitized them to such gaucheries.

It should be stressed that no matter how one formulates a religious definition of Jewish community, there is no definition which reads any Jew out of that community. It is an old Talmudic principle that *yisroel, af al pi shehatah, yisroel hu*—no matter how far a Jew may have deviated from religious faith and practice, he remains a Jew. But by no stretch of reason can the Jew who has renounced those aspects of Judaism that, from a religious point of view are most central and sacred, be the touchstone of a new definition of Jewish community. The matter has been well stated by Robert Gordis:

The right of all Jews to partial acceptance of Jewish values having been granted, inference has then been drawn that every pattern of acceptance or rejection is equally valid, with the unwarranted and all but fatal conclusion that Jewish group life must be geared to a level capable of including all who do not deny that they are Jews and no more than that . . .

The fundamental error lies in assuming that if a group of Jews, each of whom espouses some partial aspect of Jewish life, or none at all, meet together, they constitute a community in any except the purely physical sense . . . that some Jews are interested in the synagogue, others in Zionism, others in relief, or local philanthropy, still others in anti-defamation or in good will, does not create a community but a chaos.²²

The conclusion to be drawn from these remarks is not that secular Jewish organizations do not occupy a legitimate place in Jewish life. It does not even follow that the secular Jew may not define Jewish peoplehood in his own way and seek to organize the Jewish community on the basis of his definition.* All of this is obviously quite proper in a voluntary, democratic society. What does follow, however, is that the rabbi and the Synagogue have at least as much a right to do the same, and that accusations of “clericalism” and “un-Jewishness” which greet such efforts are not only graceless, but betray an appalling ignorance of Jewish history and tradition.

The religious aspects of Judaism have always been, and clearly remain, the chief commitment of the American Jewish community, as has been the case throughout Jewish history. The Synagogue, for all of its shortcomings—and they are, regrettably, legion—continues to serve as the central focus of meaningful Jewish existence and as the mainstay of all organized Jewish life. It is, therefore, incumbent on our religious leadership, be it lay or rabbinic, to exercise a communal role that gives this religious element its fullest expression. It is a responsibility which Jewish religious leadership must finally assume if it is not to betray the Jewish past and forfeit the future.

22. Robert Gordis, “Toward a Creative Jewish Community in America,” *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly*, Vol. XIII (1949), pp. 321–22.

* I fail to see, however, how a secular definition of Jewish peoplehood can give the concept a content which distinguishes it from Italian, Irish or Polish peoplehood. The term, when used to describe the mystery of Israel which transcends sociological categories, is, necessarily, a theological statement.

The Bible in Contemporary Israeli Humanism

SHEMARYAHU TALMON

THE BIBLE IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE THE cornerstone of the Jewish national-cultural heritage. This collection of ancient Hebrew writings has acquired for itself a permanent, fundamental position in the Jewish historical consciousness and education, as well as in the Hebrew language and literature. It is a phenomenon which, to all appearances, does not require further reflecting upon. However, the very fact that there has arisen again the question of the place which the Bible occupies in contemporary Israeli humanism clearly indicates that we are not really sure that the problem needs no further consideration. It implies, in fact, the notion that the issue must come up for discussion every now and then, whenever a generation needs a logical justification for the distinguished place held by the Bible in the many diverse aspects of life in Israel.

It hardly needs stressing that in using the term "Bible" here, reference is made to the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Scriptures which are held holy by the Jewish people and which are the traditional basis of Jewish religio-national culture. Now, by combining the terms "holy" and "national," we have already hinted at a pivotal aspect of the problem which will occupy us here.

In order not to widen the discussion beyond its desired limits, we shall direct ourselves to those twenty-four books alone, and shall not touch on the growths and appendages which have become attached to them over the centuries, arising from the layers upon layers of Biblical interpretation, or from the more recent results of research into the ancient Near East. It is freely admitted that this restriction places the Bible in a historical isolation which does not allow full justice to be done to the matter in hand.

Also, in the definition of the second component in the title of this paper—"contemporary"—the path of restriction must be taken: what shall be discussed is the meaning of the Bible for Israel, here and now, and for the majority of Israelis. It is also assumed that what will be said transcends the boundaries of the Jewish society in Israel, and pertains, to a greater or lesser degree, to Jewry in the Diaspora as well.

The term "humanism" is used here, first and foremost, in reference to the unique configuration in which it is encountered in Israel, as a

SHEMARYAHU TALMON is associate professor of Bible of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

system of thought and a manner of education. This system rebels against traditional Jewish-religious authority, refuses to accept its rules and customs as a set of normative ordinances which are above any reassessment or discussion, and endeavors to break a new path towards the realization of Jewish and humanistic-cultural values in general. The majority of present-day Israelis have inherited from their fathers a rebellion against religious authority which aims at placing the God of Israel in the very center of Jewish life. Concurrent with this rejection, they wholeheartedly subscribe to a man-centered humanism. The axiom of Protagoras—"man is the measure of all things"—which is at the basis of all humanism or "hominism," is characteristic of the Zionist ideology upon which this generation was raised.

The Zionist movement, as a typical representative of a national restoration ideology, also advocated and helped launch the renaissance of the ancient culture of Israel, its language and literature. In its very essence, modern Zionism has deep roots in, and is an offshoot of, the humanism of the Middle Ages, which was initially anchored in an existentially meaningful revival of the classic Graeco-Roman civilization and later opened up and fortified in the nations the cultivation of an identification with their historic past and their national-cultural heritage. Humanism and nationalism were not mutually exclusive in the European setting, nor are they contradictory concepts in Israel. European humanism put a premium on national-cultural uniqueness and thus, in fact, proclaimed and intended to implement an ideology which diverged significantly from the basic transnational cosmopolitanism of the church to which it was opposed. At the same time, humanism placed in the center of the universe not God, but man in his society, leading to a *Religion des Diesseits*, as it was called in the middle of the last century.

Some identical or similar trends may be discerned in modern Israeli humanism. The return to a Jewish past, in the name of what Martin Buber designated "Hebrew humanism" was, of necessity, selective. It was anchored in those periods in Israel's history that could serve as a basis for a humanism which aimed at building a new society with a common historical consciousness and a common cultural-linguistic heritage, concentrated in a specific geo-political area. In consequence, this renaissance trend bypassed generations of Jewish existence and creativity which had been divested of any tangible expression of socio-national sovereignty. Hence, the probability that Jewish humanism would, from the very outset, fasten upon the basic stratum of Biblical literature and history was greater than the possibility of its attaching itself to the tenets of Jewish thought and literature of later generations. The idea of a sovereign, Jewish national existence in the present age derives ample

support from the Biblical period, and certainly much more than it does from any other period in Jewish history. A wholehearted reidentification with that period, and with the Bible itself, did not seem to require an acceptance of institutionalized Jewish religion, which is predominantly anchored in the thought of the post-Biblical generations, i.e. in normative Rabbinic literature and the literature of the Middle Ages. These had been passed over by modern Jewish humanism which rejected all normative religion, and were similarly neglected by many promulgators of a national Jewish renaissance.

But such a basing of Jewish-Israeli humanism on the Bible, without subscribing to institutionalized religious norms, which ultimately are derived from the Bible, or in fact, to any precepts of faith at all, has not yet been proved legitimate. Buber saw in this type of humanism a distortion of the very basis of Biblical concepts, and his opposition to such a humanism did not derive from his own adherence to Jewish normative religion, for he was not a partner to that, but, rather, from his conception of a Hebrew humanism which, for him, cannot exist without being built on the faith of Israel. Israel as a nation and as a religion are one, unlike Christianity, which is supra-national. Hebrew humanism, indeed, can foster a return to its national and cultural sources, freeing itself at the same time from scholastic religious discipline. However, it is imperative to recognize its inseparable links with the Biblical faith, as a unified system of life and thought which cannot be impaired. Buber wished to determine the place of the Bible in Hebrew humanism on the basis of a non-ritualistic faith, similar to trends which emerged in Christianity in the period of the Reformation with Calvin and Zwingli, and are apparent in some branches of modern Protestant humanism. Buber's criticism of the superficial employment of the Bible as a pillar of Jewish humanism is pointed. He disapproved, justly, of the custom of paying lip service to the Bible, in conjunction with a complete rejection of its inherent meaning. Towards the end of his essay, "Judaism and Culture," he says:

When we went out from the walls of the ghetto into the world, there came to us from within a greater trouble than all the troubles that came to us from the outside; in the depths of the foundation, in that unique unity of nation and religion, a deep division became apparent which since then continues to widen. In the great event of our days, the return of the Jews into the family of nations by the establishment of the Jewish state, the impact of this division can also be discerned. Again we have been given a house for ourselves and the freedom to crystallize in it the essence of our existence. However, between Israel and the essence of its existence there arose a barrier. It has been said that now we are assured of the renaissance of a viable Jewish culture. But where and how has true culture flourished without cleaving to and acting in accordance with such a fundamental principle? There are some who try to cover up that inner division by applying religious concepts, like "God of Israel" and

"Messiah," to acts and events which are of a purely political nature. These terms and concepts cannot object, and whosoever wishes to use them may do so unhindered. But the reality inherent in them escapes all that is not directed towards their essence and its actualization, which is the actualization of truth and righteousness.

The recognition of Biblical faith as a basis for defining the position of the Bible in modern humanism may be considered an acceptable solution if one is ready to subscribe to Buber's brand of a Hebrew-faith humanism preempted of ritualistic religion. However, this is not the solution to the problem of this generation which proclaims a humanism without God and without faith and yet yearns for a return to the historic sources of Jewish culture and strives to determine a place for the Bible in his own world of ideas. The very placing of the Bible in a humanistic faith without the clear circumscription of an institutionalized religion may breed those wild shoots of near-religious substitutes against which Buber cautions. The mere humanist-faith identification with the Bible may easily deteriorate into a type of romantic nativism and produce an idealization of that stage in the history of Israel in which, as it were, the relations between the people and its God had not yet assumed cultic-ritual forms, namely the ancient period of the desert wanderings.

In order to avoid the blurring of demarcation lines between a Bible-centered Jewish faith and a humanism that is bent on integrating the Bible in its ideological framework without submitting to the normative power of its teaching, the relation to, and the appreciation of, the Bible must be grounded in a distinct intellectual-pedagogical base. Humanitas-knowledge—must determine the place of the Bible in contemporary humanism: the study of the Bible and its understanding from the viewpoint of the onlooker, instead of attempting to identify with it. Contemporary Jewish humanism will apportion a central place in its world of ideas to the Bible as a primary source of the knowledge of Jewish history in antiquity, for the understanding of the genesis of the Jewish faith, and as a major formative factor in the development of the Hebrew language and literature. Most of Biblical literature, like most modern literature, is basically anthropocentric. It revolves around man, in relation to his neighbor, and to the society of which he is a component. The Bible, like modern literature, accepts man with his achievement and his failings. The Biblical affirmation of all that is human in man assures the Bible of a place in modern humanism.

Even humanism without faith will ultimately find normative values in the Bible. The life of the individual in the Bible is always reflected in the life of his society. The acts of the individual determine the fate of his society, to the point that the relations of one man to his fellow become a basis for the judgment of his society. One may conclude that, *mutatis mutandis*, bearing in mind changed conditions, the man-centered

and people-centered concepts of the Bible can serve as a source of inspiration for our generation. The subjection of the will of the individual to the essential goals of his society, which is characteristic of Biblical thought may become a formative factor in the solidification of the Israeli society and a force which unites it with the Jewish people at large. The principles of righteousness and justice in determining the co-existence of man and his fellow, or man within his society, and of nation with nation, without blurring the singularity of the individual or the nation, can be fruitfully emulated in our own times. This generation, which has neither religion nor faith, can find in the Bible a theory of man and a theory of society which can serve as a basis for a new Jewish humanism.

In subscribing to these tenets we may not be doing full justice to *the Bible*. *It can be argued with justification that it is impossible to absorb the Bible into our world of thought without accepting the faith in one God, Who directs the ways of the individual and the people.* But this path, obviously, is not open to a majority of the present generation: approaching the Bible by the path of intellectual enlightenment may yet lead some to discover for themselves the bases of a humanistic faith as they are contained in the Bible.

Two Principles of Character Education in the Aggadah

BERNARD MANDELBAUM

The Role of Aggadah

Aggadah IS USUALLY DEFINED AS THE MORAL and ethical teachings of Rabbinic literature, in contrast to *halakhah* which is the law and the legal decrees. A. A. Halevi, in his *Shaarei Haaggadah*, ascribes a different reason for the names given to the principal categories of Rabbinic literature, relating them to the external form of the literature rather than their contents: *mishnah* is so named for "stating or repeating" the law and lore; *talmud* is the further "learning and explication" of it; *mikra* is the "written tradition" which is read, and *aggadah* is the total, expanded "oral" tradition. As the developing oral tradition, *aggadah* is more than a specific category of ideas. It reflects the reality of continuing Jewish history and experience. *Aggadah*, in this definition, then, is the *total oral tradition* (i.e. including both *halakhah* and *aggadah*) in contrast to *mikra* which is the written Torah that is read. As the "spoken" tradition, *aggadah* records the dialogue between wise men as they confronted *mikra* with the changing circumstances of history, and derived insight, purpose and strength for human life and their own existence as Jews. The organic process of developing these values and rulings, usually referred to as *midrash*, with *aggadah* as its end product, is more than a literary achievement. It incorporates an approach to life which combines continuity and change, commitment and flexibility, ideas and action.

In Willa Cather's *Obscure Destinies*, the hero, Mr. Rosen, provides an interesting metaphor which throws light on the ultimate achievement of *aggadah* in the mind of the Jew throughout history. "All countries were beautiful to Mr. Rosen. He carried a *country* of his own in his mind and was able to unfold it like a tent in any wilderness." (*italics mine*) For "country" substitute "*aggadah*"; for "wilderness" substitute the "vicissitudes of daily life" or "the values of a surrounding world" and you see the unique power of the *aggadah* to be unfolded in any wilderness to raise the Jew above the ephemeral and attach him to the purposeful and eternal.

Further insight into the power of *aggadah* is suggested by the definition of myth presented in "The Religious Philosophy of the Jews" by Samuel Hirsch who "finds himself in complete agreement with the Bibli-

BERNARD MANDELBAUM is President of the Jewish Theological Seminary, N.Y.

cal story. He does not hesitate to characterize the story as mythical, but myth for him is not (as is true of rationalistic interpretations of history) a poetic fabrication. It is '*the presentation of an inner event in the dress of an outer occurrence which fully presents this content free of all contingency.*'" (italics mine)¹

Aggadah, or myth (in Hirsch's definition), is the repository of inner ideas which shape the outer behavior of Jews. Many of them have ultimately shaped the course of western civilization. Alfred North Whitehead described this reality of history when he wrote: "Thoughts lie dormant for ages, and then almost suddenly, as it were, find that they have embodied themselves in institutions." Ideas vital for the good society are often ignored and resisted because they demand the sacrifice of temporary advantages for long range goals, but the ideas that underlie these meaningful goals are not dormant. The major ones have been kept alive by *aggadah*, in the tradition of Judaism, "until their time has come."

Without minimizing the creative role of other traditions and cultures in shaping Western civilization, the historic role of Judaism in establishing the goals of a good society is evident in many vital areas, as can be illustrated in the way *aggadah* keeps alive two principles of education in character.

The Role of Study in Fashioning Human Character

The failure of contemporary education is traceable to at least two causes: the absence of concentration on education in character, and a fumbling ignorance about how to achieve it even when the concern is there. This is especially true on the college level and is expressed poignantly in the following passage from J. D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*. Franny is speaking:

What happened was, I got the idea in my head—and I could not get it out—that college was just one more dopey, inane place in the world dedicated to piling up treasure on earth and everything. I mean treasure is treasure, for heaven's sake. What's the difference whether the treasure is money, or property, or even culture, or even just plain knowledge. . . .

I don't think it would have all got me quite so down if just once in a while—just once in a while—there was at least some polite little perfunctory implication that knowledge should lead to wisdom, and that if it doesn't it's just a disgusting waste of time! But there never is! You never even hear any hints dropped on campus that wisdom is supposed to be the goal of knowledge. You hardly even hear the word "wisdom" mentioned! Do you want to hear something funny? Do you want to hear something—and this is the absolute truth—in almost four years of college, the only time I can even remember the expression of "wise man" being used was in my freshman year, in Political Science! It was used in reference to some weird old pooppy elder Statesman who'd made a fortune in

1. Julius Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism*, trans. David Silverman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 316.

the stock market and then gone to Washington to be an advisor to President Roosevelt. Honestly now! Four years of college, almost! I'm not saying that it happens to everybody, but I just get so upset when I think about it I could die.²

Wisdom, as understood in Judaism, is the wisdom of good action. It is the goal of all learning and fundamental to any theory of education. A man's character, his moral quality, is shaped by the method of study kept vividly alive and at the very center of concern by *aggadah*. The classical discussion of this relationship between study and good action took place in the Academy of Lydda between Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiba:

Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nitzza's house in Lydda, when the question was raised before them: Is study greater or practice? Rabbi Tarfon answered, saying: Practice is greater. Rabbi Akiba answered, saying: Study is greater for it leads to practice. Then they all answered and said: Study is greater for its leads to action.³

As pointed out by Isaac Weiss Hirsh,⁴ this discussion reflected a practical problem facing the Jewish people in a specific historic situation. During the Hadrianic persecutions, both study and the practice of the commandments were forbidden, and the leaders of the generation had to decide which was the greater risk. However, from the point of view of *aggadah*, that discussion deals with the more permanent issue of the role of study in shaping a person's character, as we see from the statement which precedes it in the same paragraph of the *Sifre*:

"Study them and observe them faithfully" (*Deuteronomy* 5:1), this verse tells us that action depends upon study.⁵

A Theory of Education—First Principle

The special role of study in determining the ethical behavior of a person and shaping his character is described in the opening statements of one of the most popular portions of the *mishnah* studied most frequently by the masses, *Pirkei Avot*, which is usually translated aptly, though not literally, as "The Ethics of the Fathers." Each of the first four Rabbinic teachings deals with an aspect of the role of study and ideas in the development of character. They outline two basic principles which are the cornerstones of any meaningful theory of education. The first stresses the powerful role of a teacher and the example of his behavior as an influence of the student.

They (the Men of the Great Assembly) said three things: be slow in judgment, raise many wise men and make a hedge about your words.⁶

2. J. D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey* (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), pp. 146-147.

3. *Sifre*, *Deuteronomy*, 41; *Kiddushin*, 40B.

4. *Dor Dor Vedorshav* II, p. 25.

5. *Sifre*, *Deuteronomy*, 41.

6. *Pirkei Avot*, 1:1.

Explaining the relationship among these three assertions, Dr. Finkelstein describes the role of a teacher in effective instruction:

The hedge required by the instructors was not for the Torah, but for the words of the judge. His audience was entitled not merely to specific decisions, but also to an *explanation* of his decisions. The argument enabled hearers to *emulate his manner of analysis and thus to apply Torah to the details of their lives*. . . .

In its original meaning, the injunction to make a hedge about one's words naturally led to the dictum, "and raise many wise men." The wisdom to which the saying refers is the Hasidean and Biblical *wisdom of knowing right from wrong and pursuing it*. Through slowness in judgment (i.e., great care in what and how one says things) local judges instruct disciples and help rear a generation of wisdom . . . the judicial and *pedagogic functions* of the scholar become inseparable in the Hasidean tradition. (*italics mine*)⁷

Aggadah stresses the role of serving the learned (in Torah—*shimush hakhamim*) as a major force in character education. The student learns from what a teacher says, but particularly from his daily acts. Rabbi Yoḥanan dramatically demonstrated the priority of learning for his disciple, Rabbi Ḥiya son of Abba:

Rabbi Yoḥanan was going from Tiberias to Zippori and was leaning on the shoulder (of his disciple) Rabbi Ḥiya bar Abba. When they passed (a particular) field, (Rabbi Yoḥanan) said: "This field once belonged to me but I sold it because I preferred busying myself with the study of Torah." They then passed a vineyard and Rabbi Yoḥanan said: "This vineyard belonged to me and I sold it in order to concentrate more on the study of Torah." (Later) they passed an olive orchard and Rabbi Yoḥanan said: "This orchard belonged to me but I sold it so as to spend more time on the study of Torah." Rabbi Ḥiya began to cry. "Why do you cry?" (Rabbi Yoḥanan asked). He answered: "I am crying because you don't seem to have left yourself anything for your old age." Rabbi Yoḥanan answered: "Ḥiya, my son, was it really a silly thing to sell something (i.e., material things) which took only six days to be given to us (by God) and to acquire that (namely Torah) which was given to us after forty days and forty nights?"⁸

Such instruction, the careful observing of the ways of a sage, reached into every detail of life:

Rabbi Yoḥanan further said in the name of Simeon son of Yoḥai, the service of Torah is ever greater than its study. For it is said: "Here is Elisha the son of Shafat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah" (2 Samuel 7:10). It is not said "who learned," but "who poured water." This teaches that the service of Torah is greater than its study.⁹

In serving his master, Elijah, Elisha was taught elements of cleanliness and good manners. Nothing in the action of the teacher was too miniscule for observance as a source of instruction by example.

It has been taught: Rabbi Akiba said, "Once I went in after Rabbi Joshua to a privy and I learnt from him three things" . . . said Ben Azzai to him:

7. *On the Ethics of Pharisaism*, an unpublished paper, pp. 36–38.

8. *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, p. 402.

9. *Berakhot*, 7B.

"Did you dare to take such liberties with your master?" He replied: "It was a matter of Torah, and I had to learn. . ." Rabbi Kahana once went in and hid under Rab's bed. He heard him chatting (with his wife) and joking and doing what he required. . . He said to him: "Kahana, are you there? Get out because it is rude." He replied: "It is a matter of Torah, and I have to learn."¹⁰

A student could best learn the application of the law to life by "observing his teacher in his daily routine, at prayer, at meals, even in the privy, and especially in the academy, answering questions and deciding cases, the desired result being a disciple trained to study and to teach and qualified to render proper decisions."¹¹

Closer to our times, the role of acts of kindness was indelibly impressed upon the disciples of the *Hatam Sofer* who guided his personal action by the values inherent in the following *aggadah*:

Rabbi Lulyani of Rome taught in the name of Rabbi Judah the son of Simon. The Holy One blessed be He stated there are four members of your household and four in Mine. Your four are your son, your daughter, your manservant and maidservant. The four members of My household are the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow. And all four are referred to in one verse: "Rejoice in your festivals—you, your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow" (*Deut.* 16:14). Said the Holy One blessed be He, you rejoice the members of My household and those of your household on the festivals that I gave you. If you do this, I, too, will bring happiness to your household as to Mine.¹²

For the *Hatam Sofer* this spelled itself out in a commitment to specific moral responsibilities. Before each festival, he would send his disciples with provisions to the homes of the widows in the town. Furthermore, he celebrated the wedding of each of his children by providing the dowry for an orphan who was being married. Since God was providing joy for his household, his response was to provide for the widow and orphan of the Almighty's household.

Each of us can probably recall the influence of a great teacher, which is also the role played by parents. The power of their personal example, illustrating the ideas of their instruction, made the real impact on our lives. That basic principle of education, implied by the Men of the Great Assembly in this first statement of the *Pirkei Avot*, is expanded in the fourth one:

Yossi son of Yoezer teaches: "Let thy house be a meeting place for the wise and sit in the very dust of their feet and thirstily drink in their words."

The commentary of Rabbi Joseph, son of Joseph Nahmias, explains Yossi son of Yoezer's principle of learning as "attending upon learned men."

10. *Berakhot*, 62A.

11. Dov Zlotnick, *The Tractate "Mourning,"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 22, note 106.

12. *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, p. 173.

This is an exhortation to us to attend upon the sages, for attendance is even more instructive than study.¹³

Education is viewed as much more than the accumulation of facts and ideas. Its essential goal is the wisdom to choose between right and wrong. The wise man, the good teacher, is the expert in such behavior. Observing his ways carefully, learning from his method of relating reason to action, the disciple can integrate into his own character the teacher's approach to human problems. For the wise man, ethical decision-making involves rigorous effort, approaching a science, in the study of alternatives among the actions that are possible for man. And, like a student in the laboratory who assiduously observes every step of the instructor's experiments, a disciple of the wise has the opportunity, in "attending upon learned men," to learn from the habits, the reasoning and the art of human relations of his teacher.

The calamity of today's university in this regard need not be detailed here. The "publish or perish" syndrome, faculty experts preoccupied with private research and extra-curricular assignments for government and industry—these realities militate against any meaningful faculty-student contact. The ideal method of education, as taught by *aggadah*—the lasting influence of great men by intimate contact with them, observing their ways of thinking and acting—has been missing from American education.

But to some extent there has been an awakening to an appreciation of this pivotal role of the wisdom and conduct of the learned man. Recently, it was projected as a goal in a study by *Life Magazine* on the inadequacies of American education.

In the midst of the blare of commercial success we must recapture an *honest respect for learning and learned people*. Abandoning that basic virtue in the first place was never meant to be part of modern education and is part of no theory. . . .

If we are going to start insisting upon honest respect for learning, hard work and good conduct, *most of us will have to get tough with ourselves* as well as with our children and our schools.¹⁴ (*italics mine*)

A Theory of Education—Second Principle

The first principle of a theory of education is, then, the influence and example of a teacher. The second principle involves the subject matter of study. It is the concern of *aggadah* to put ethics into the curriculum. This second principle is developed in the second and third Rabbinic statements of the *Pirkei Avot*.

Simeon the Righteous was one of the last members of the Great Assembly. He used to say: On three things the world stands: on the Torah, on Temple Service and on acts of kindness.

13. Based on statements in *Berakhot*, 7B and *Tosafot* on *Ketubot*, 17A.

14. "It's Time to Close our Carnival," *Life Magazine*, March 24, 1958.

The commentaries explain Torah as “the study of Torah,” which teaches man the way of relating himself to God (“Temple Service”), which, in turn, is the basis for his proper relationship to this fellow man (“acts of kindness”).

The statement is given a focus of ethical concern in *The Fathers, According to Rabbi Nathan*:

Once, as Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai was coming forth from Jerusalem, Rabbi Joshua followed after him and beheld the Temple in ruins. “Woe unto us,” Rabbi Joshua lamented, “that this, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste.”

“My son,” Rabbi Yohanan said to him, “be not grieved; we have another atonement as effective as this. And what is it? It is acts of loving-kindness, as it is said, ‘For I desire mercy and not sacrifice’” (Hosea 6:6).¹⁵

Sensitivity to ethics is further illustrated by the comment of the *Mahzor Vitry*:

The rabbis taught, acts of kindness are greater than charity in three ways: Charity is something a man does with his wealth, acts of kindness he carries with his wealth and by means of his person; charity affects the poor only, acts of lovingkindness affect the poor and the rich; charity applies only to the living, acts of lovingkindness apply to the living and the dead.¹⁶

The way *aggadah* builds mounting insights of ethical concern, as stated by Simeon the Righteous, points to Judaism’s view of it as the essential subject of education. The comment of *Mahzor Vitry* points to one of the results of proper study, as leading to good action for its own sake, which is the mark of a man of character. It is also the meaning of the very next statement in *Pirkei Avot*:

Antigonus of Sokho received (the tradition) from Simeon the Righteous. He used to say: Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of their allowance. Be rather like servants who serve their master with no thought of an allowance—and let the fear of heaven be upon you.

On the face of it, the metaphor is unconvincing. In *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*, one of the disciples of Antigonus of Sokho raises this very question: “Is it possible that a laborer should do his work all day and not receive his reward in the evening?”¹⁷ However, what Antigonus teaches is explained by the Meiri:

Let not your service of God in carrying out His commandments be motivated by the desire for reward—as is the case of a child who does not appreciate the value of wisdom and will not study until you have bribed him with trinkets or money. . . . *One must study for the sake of wisdom and Torah . . .* (italics mine)¹⁸

15. *Avot de Rabbi Natan* (A) Chapter 4—Translation by Judah Goldin in *The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the Fathers*.

16. Based on the passage from *Sukkah*, 49B.

17. *Avot de Rabbi Natan* (A) chapter 5.

18. See note 15.

The goal of study, according to *aggadah*, is the acquisition of that knowledge which molds a man's character, so that he can approach the image of God in himself and acquire the capacity to be a creative partner with the Almighty in helping fashion a better world.

A Similar Goal for American Education

Röbert Hutchins has frequently described the failure of contemporary education in terms which echo this view of *aggadah*:

The demands of this new world, like the political community, are first of all demands that we think and learn. We face them ill prepared in a world that depends upon what people think. . . .¹⁹

Consider the remarkable parallel between the subject matter of *aggadah* in developing the Jewish ethos and its way of cultivating the man of character and Hutchins' description of the method which developed the American character:

The Founding Fathers meant us to learn. . . . The Constitution is to be interpreted, therefore, as a charter of learning. We are to learn how to develop the seeds the fathers planted under the conditions of our own time. This political botany means that nothing we have learned and no process of learning could be unconstitutional. What would be unconstitutional would be limitations or inhibitions on learning. . . . Learning is a rational process. Law is an ordinance of reason, directed to the common good. The process of reaching a judicial conclusion is to be criticized in terms of its conformity, not to local or popular custom, but to universal standards of reasonableness. If the Constitution is to teach us, and we are to learn under its instruction, the dialogue that goes on about its meaning must be about what is *reasonable and unreasonable, right and wrong, just and unjust*. The question is not what interests are at stake, not what are the mores of the community, not who has the power or who is the dominant group, not what the courts will do or the legislature has done, but what is *reasonable, right and just*. . . .²⁰ (italics mine)

Such an approach to the education of man has been kept alive through the ages by *aggadah* and is the greatest need of our society. It is reflected in this statement of Hutchins and others who criticize²¹ American education for its almost total preoccupation with preparation for a profession and making a living (the "allowance" in the statement of Antigonus). The purpose of education is the fashioning of a life governed by the wisdom which is the possession of the man of good character.

In summary, then, the theory of education kept alive by *aggadah* stresses two basic principles:

- (1) The role of a teacher's example, its influence on his student through adequate contact between the two, and the overriding interest of the teacher in the development of his disciple's character.

19. *Conference on American Character*, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

20. *Ibid.*

21. See, for example, Irving Kristol, *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, Dec. 8, 1968.

(2) A curriculum of study consisting of wisdom literature, such as *aggadah*, which is not a prescribed code of ethics, but reflects the continuous reasoning, effort and persistence that are involved in ethical decision-making and the development of character.

We know of the almost insurmountable obstacles in contemporary society to raise the status and improve the training of gifted, dedicated teachers. Our experience with many research programs in Jewish education gives us sufficient awareness of the almost equally trying task of Yet it is self-deceiving to think that there are shortcuts or any other way. The extent to which our tradition succeeded in training character in our ancestors reflected their single-mindedness of purpose and the highest priority placed on those goals as the greatest need of man in their time or at any time.

To achieve these goals in our time, for our schools and for our children, demands unrelenting effort and struggle. Yet the reward makes it worthwhile. In the words of the Rabbis:

Good people must experience travail. If they accept it as part of life, they can enjoy the blessing of seeing children who live long (and meaningful) lives of Torah.²²

22. *Berakhot*, 5A.

Samuel Hirsch's *Absolute Religiously*

GERSHON GREENBERG

THE EARLIER WORK OF SAMUEL HIRSCH (1815–1889) has as its purpose the formulation of a systematic Jewish philosophy for modern man. Specifically, this means a presentation of the intellectual principles of Judaism in line with the thought of Hegel. Hirsch could not, however, accept Hegel's system as it was, since, for Hegel, Judaism was in the past and had long been surpassed by Christianity. Hirsch's dilemma, then, was to utilize Hegel's philosophical values while rejecting their consequences. In his major work, *Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden*, and in the sermons which he wrote during his early years, the central issue is the role of Judaism in history, and the role of history in Judaism. Hirsch's justification of a Jewish-oriented history, as over against Hegel's Christian-oriented one, is that in a Jewish scheme the integrity of other religions is preserved, while Hegel's philosophical Christianity imposes itself on the history of religions and perverts the content inherent to non-Christian religions. What emerges from an analysis of Hirsch's views, however, is that it is not possible for him to present a Jewish view of history without falling into the same "trap."

Israel, for Hirsch, is an eternal example to the other nations of the principles for which man was created. When schematically drawn, Hirsch's history of religions portrays a sharp division between an active world of Judaism-Christianity and a passive world of all other religions. Judaism is the embodiment of the ethical principle that man need not sin, while other religions progress towards the realization of that principle. When they do finally achieve it, they are joined with Judaism in the stage of absolute religiosity.

In passive religiosity, spirit remains unreconciled with its objective existence in nature, and the religious spirit is overwhelmed by nature and the laws of necessity. In active religiosity, the spirit comprehends itself. Man, then, leads a life of freedom as his good, spiritual potential increasingly sublimates into itself the realm of nature in which he finds himself. Judaism, itself, is divided into an intensive form, in which it develops its relationship with God, and an extensive one, Christianity, which "opens the window" of Judaism to the rest of the world. Besides being the exemplar for the development of religious history, Judaism provides, throughout, the criteria for this development.

GERSHON GREENBERG is visiting assistant professor of Jewish Thought at the University of Rochester.

In passive religions, man is bound up in a world defined by nature, and abstract nature religions fluctuate among various abstract reactions to man's dependency on nature. Man is either sunk in a nature which has become divine, or he creates a supernatural form according to which nature must conform, or his religious life consists in rejecting nature. In concrete nature, religious abstract principles are drawn into nature, with varying results: either order is available only in nature, or nature is divinized, or man remains mystified about what can exist outside nature. In the anthropological nature religions, abstract and concrete nature religions are synthesized. In Greece, divinity was derived from the content of human consciousness and then subjected to the categories of nature. There was no available principle, however, for understanding the spiritual world. In Roman religion, a principle was ultimately derived, but it was without meaning or substance. The state was the external principle to which all pleasure and profit had to be submitted.

In all passive religions, man is tied to nature as either his point of reference or his point of termination. The synthesis of these two does not provide him with a clear spiritual principle, but nonetheless, religion has progressed to an awareness of spirit. The anthropological nature religions represent man's attempt to consider the possibilities of spirit. Thus, Roman religion, after providing all possible profit for its divine state, questions the point of profit. After the Roman has utilized his entire world, he is forced to ask himself: "Of what use is utilization?" At that point, man's eyes begin to open to the world of spirit.

While the passive religions have struggled to make the most of the natural world, Judaism has been developing according to the values of spirit. Abraham, instilled with the idea that man is a spiritual image of God, renounces the values of the world of nature. For Hirsch, this renunciation is equivalent to the birth of freedom and goodness. Man is no longer controlled by nature's laws of necessity, nor does he assume that he is a creature of nature, and, therefore, evil. After Abraham has renounced the world, after he has distinguished between his calling and the character of his environment, he sets out to change the world, and for this purpose he founds a nation which will exemplify his principles. The Jews are the chosen people insofar as it is their task to enact the principle that nature should be subsumed into spirit, that man is a free being who can, and should, be good.

The life of the Jewish people has been "intensive" in its orientation, and they have undergone a unique series of experiences with God. First, God approached a certain people, and made them Jews. Then, they were provided with the Torah so that they might understand their mission and how to carry it out. The contents of this Torah were to be learned inwardly, and for this purpose the Jews had to leave the protection of God and had to relate their knowledge to the rest of the world in

order for it to become meaningful to them. Then, having reconciled themselves with God and the content of His calling, Israel must now wait until the entire world, as well, learns the content of the Torah. Until all men become the same, until they all have the same religious basis, Israel's work is incomplete. Thus, the intensive character of Israel's experience is modified by the fact that its growth is dependent on external circumstances, and the fulfillment of its ideal depends on its drawing other nations into itself.

Christianity is the means for bringing the rest of the world to an awareness of Judaism, and in the sense that the true content of Christianity, as exemplified by Jesus, is the furthering of the principles of Judaism, Christianity must be seen as working within the realm of Judaism. But, at the same time, it is the extension of Judaism. Through Jesus of Nazareth, Judaism is made real to the rest of the world, and Judaism's fulfillment begins with its availability to the rest of man.

There are, thus, two streams in history. On the one side is the development of non-Jewish religions, on the other Judaism and its Christian manifestation. While passive religions become increasingly aware of the possibilities of the spiritual life, Judaism is strengthening its character and making itself available to other nations. The two streams are brought together in terms of Israel's leadership of religious history. As other religions come closer to Israel and Israel makes itself more available, Judaism is persisting, while other religions die away. The progress of these non-Jewish religions consists in their yielding to later stages in the progress of passive religions. Magic must eventually yield to the religions of India and Persia, and these, in turn, to Greece and Rome. On the side of passive religions, progress means the disappearance of religions. On the side of active religiousness, it is the strengthening of a single religion. In fact, for the sake of the strength of Israel, each culture donates its best products to Israel. Greek beauty, Roman law and German profundity contribute to its development. Finally, Israel will form the inner harmony of all the partial products of religious consciousness.

This movement towards Judaism and the establishment of Judaism as the epitome of man's progress are costly for Israel. Since Israel has stood firm, as the people which is to despise evil, it has, consequently, been despised by those who love evil. In order to show the enduring quality of goodness, despite the antagonism of other cultures, it has had to suffer. Since, for Hirsch, good is identical with reality and evil with nothingness, Israel survives, even though its survival has been identical with its suffering. Hirsch is optimistically sure that history will culminate in a stage of absolute religiosity, when all religions are spiritually oriented. Then, Israel will have fulfilled its task, and it will be able to melt into the common content shared by all religions. However, to remind the

word of Israel's great accomplishment and, thereby, the task of man, it will retain its cultic identity.

Hirsch wants to show that history can be Jewish without demeaning the integrity of other religions and that Judaism's task is fulfilled when it identifies with other religions. He maintains that with this conclusion the difficulty of Hegel's system, wherein philosophical Christianity suffocates the rest of history, is overcome. But it is not possible for Hirsch to achieve his aim, since Judaism remains absolute. It provides the criteria for the development of religious history, and essentially, its principles of freedom, goodness and living in God's image remain unchanged. Changes in Jewish life do not affect these principles. The changes which Israel does undergo, for the sake of "accommodating" to other cultures, are part of Israel's original tenets. Judaism is eternal, while other religions are ephemeral. Israel is chosen, while other religions are not. Judaism is good, real and free, while other religions must first learn the meaning of these principles.

Certainly, as long as Hirsch stood within the Hegelian system, it was impossible for him to change it. He could not, simultaneously, employ a dialectic of world history and then make it undialectical. He wanted to defuse the subject of dialectic and identify it with the object, but he did not want to forsake the absolute subject, Judaism. In the end, he merely substituted Judaism for Hegelian Christianity, with Judaism as both the perpetual source and the end of relations with other religions which are no more than means in Jewish progress. If anything, Hegel was more successful, for he considers all religions from the very beginning, to have the same potential, the same inner content. Christianity is inherent to the history of religions and, with time, it emerges slowly. Man's consciousness necessarily improves and, with it, his ability to form his religious categories and images. Hirsch, on the other hand, starts out with a polar situation, in which the spiritual life of Abraham is isolated from the naturalistic, pagan life of all other peoples. Non-Jewish religions, having smothered themselves in sinful existence, can never improve by themselves; and an external example, namely Judaism, must be presented to them. Hegel's Christianity passes through history and lifts history up to a level of absoluteness. Hirsch's Judaism moves alongside history, waiting for the rest of man to recognize it.

In fairness to Hirsch, it should be noted that his aim was, to begin with, an unfortunate one. He could not suddenly jump out of his own Jewish orientation, no more than Hegel could have left his Christianity. His attempt at universalism was futile, because his values were particular, so that he makes the paradoxical attempt to develop a universal religion on the basis of Jewish history and literature. The motivation for his criticism of Hegel's treatment of history was his search for a way to discredit Hegel. By showing weaknesses in Hegel's approach he hoped to

justify Judaism in the face of the Hegelian system, but he wanted to do so while employing Hegelian terms and values. Perhaps it was foolhardy to separate Hegelian content from Hegelian form; Hirsch could not keep the system and reject Hegel's views on Judaism. Content cannot be indifferent to form. Once he believed in Hegel, Hirsch should not have tried to use his system to allow for Judaism.

Martin Buber and Taoism

JAMES A. MORAN

THE RICHNESS OF MARTIN BUBER'S *I and Thou* is due in no small measure to the depth and range of philosophical and spiritual sources upon which he drew in writing it. During the period from 1900 to 1923, when *I and Thou* was completed, Buber studied and came to incorporate into his own thinking ideas from the great tradition of German romanticism, the religious and mystical traditions of both the east and west, especially the Jewish mystical tradition of Hasidism, and the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Kant, Bergson, Nietzsche and Feuerbach. While it is true that Buber's views changed and developed during this early period, *I and Thou* nevertheless clearly reflects his indebtedness to these early concerns and interests. As Maurice Friedman remarks, in his informative study of Buber's thought, most of the ideas which appear in this early period are not discarded but are preserved in his mature thought, sometimes in a changed form.¹ A fact which is often overlooked by critics and commentators is that *I and Thou* was written relatively early in Buber's long career. It is, thus, quite understandable that important clues for interpreting it can be found by studying the background influences which helped to shape its content. Critics who approach Buber's classic simply from the perspective of his later writings on dialogue and philosophical anthropology—I have in mind the essays in *Between Man and Man* and *The Knowledge of Man*—often leave aspects of the I-thou relation unclarified. In this paper I want to examine one of the important influences on Buber's classic which has not received proper attention from commentators, namely, the influence of Taoist ideas, and, more particularly, the relevance of the Taoist teachings of Chuang Tzu for interpreting the I-Thou relation.

Like many of his contemporaries, Buber turned to the east in order to discover new orientations for the life of the spirit, and found in the Oriental religious traditions a perspective on human living which provided a corrective to the dominant values and attitudes of modern western society. The Oriental emphasis on humility and acceptance of reality as the condition of genuine relation, on the joy of simple everyday relations with nature and man's fellow man, and on the need for each man to find a way in life, seemed more sensible, more human, than the frenzied pursuit of success, personal dominance and technical mastery so perva-

1. Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1959), p. 27.

JAMES A. MORAN is assistant professor of philosophy at Rosary Hill College, Buffalo, N.Y.

sive in Western society. In an early essay on Chinese culture, Buber remarks that the west, which has tended to prize the externals of success and power, might well profit from a deeper understanding of the Taoist doctrine of non-action.² We might say that Buber came to recognize that the I-It attitude, which reflects the technical orientation of western man, had not succeeded in dominating to the same extent the outlook of oriental man.

In 1909, Buber wrote an introductory essay on the teachings of Taoism which prefaced a translation of the writings of Chuang Tzu.³ Although he later disassociated himself from the Taoist doctrine of mystical unity, describing his acceptance of it as a stage through which he passed, a comparison of the major themes of Chuang Tzu's philosophy with *I and Thou* reveals that Buber incorporates many of Chuang Tzu's values and perspectives in his classic. Both thinkers challenge the dominant pragmatic values of the societies to which they speak and seek to reorient human life to a freer, more simple, less anxious course.

Chuang Tzu lived in a society which he felt was excessively concerned with the pursuit of success and fame, aggressive in its approach to nature and interpersonal life, and self assertive to a fault. He therefore sought to witness to the value of humility, the worth of the useless and the joys of unanxious living. In opposition to the common tendency to equate human life with the anxious pursuit of this or that goal, or with the constant manipulation, evaluation and ordering of the natural and social worlds, he teaches the ideal of free and easy wandering which is meant to describe an attitude of mind that allows man the inner freedom to enjoy life in untroubled calm. Thomas Merton has described the appeal of Chuang Tzu's Taoism as follows:

The way of the Taoist is found everywhere where there is a certain taste for simplicity, humility, silence and in general a refusal to take seriously the ambition and self importance one must display in order to succeed in society.⁴

We find a similar emphasis on humility, silence and inner freedom throughout *I and Thou*. The Thou, Buber claims, is not found by seeking or anxious striving, nor does it reveal itself to him who is absorbed in the endless pursuit of means. Only the man who is in possession of himself, who dwells in untroubled calm, can truly meet others. Buber describes this man in Taoist language: "Waiting, not seeking, he goes his way, he is composed before all."⁵

2. Martin Buber, "China and Us" in *A Believing Humanism*, ed. and trans. by Maurice Friedman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 189.

3. Martin Buber, "The Teaching of the Tao" in *Pointing the Way*, ed. and trans. by Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1963), p. 36.

4. Thomas Merton, *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (New York: New Directions, 1965), p. 11.

5. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner, 1958), p. 80.

Society, Chuang Tzu claims, teaches everyone the value of the useful. All its institutions and social rules attempt to school us in the art of ordering, directing and controlling the world and our everyday activities in order to achieve some practical end. What very few teach is the value of the useless. In one of his most famous passages Chuang Tzu challenges the hegemony of the useful.

So for your big tree. No use?
Then plant it in a wasteland
In emptiness
Walk idly around it,
Rest under its shadows
No axe or bill prepares its end
No one will ever cut it down
Useless? You should worry.⁶

Chuang Tzu suggests that man loses his spontaneity and freedom when he always acts with some purpose in mind. In addition, the utilitarian orientation narrows the range of life experience by identifying the whole of life with the serious world of technical mastery, efficiency and achievement. Buber, echoing Chuang Tzu, asserts that society passes to each of us the accumulated habits of mind and behavior which constitute the objective world of It, the world of function and use. The man who lives only in the It, lives in a world cluttered with purposes. When this man speaks the word Thou, he means, "O my ability to use."⁷ When, on the other hand, man addresses another as a genuine Thou he is unmindful of purposes and means. Each encounter with a Thou is a consummation. Buber writes, "The aim of relation is relation's own being, that is, contact with the Thou."⁸

Chuang Tzu sought to liberate man from the dominance of his own desires and strivings, so that he might attain an inner freedom and calmness. He felt that man is often the victim of his own compulsions and needs. Man strives to win, to subdue, to succeed, to gain this or that goal, and, in the end, loses his freedom and distorts his relations with the world and his fellow man. As man seeks honor, wealth, power or fame, he finds that his life is inevitably accompanied by worry. Chuang Tzu writes of this frenzied existence:

Driving their bodies and natures on and on, they drown in ten thousand things, and to the end of their days never turn back. Pitiful are they not.⁹

The man who is thus possessed by his desires and by the goals and objects he pursues never experiences true peace of mind. His life, Buber suggests, comes to be defined by the feverish world outside and his desire to use it.

6. Merton, *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

7. Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 60.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

9. Chuang Tzu, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. and ed. by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 267.

As a remedy for the distorting effects of man's strivings and desires, Chuang Tzu teaches the practice of non-action, of letting things alone. This does not mean that we simply abandon all action, but rather that we take possession of our self so that we might act and live in a spiritually free way. He suggests that the sage can accomplish all things by the practice of non-action. True joy is free from care and enables man to accomplish all things without concern. Doing nothing is accompanied by satisfaction and, where there is satisfaction, anxieties and troubles find no place and the years of life are many. In his essay on Taoism, Buber describes the freedom which the sage achieves through the practice of non-action as follows:

This knowledge is without passion and seeking. It rests in itself . . . It lets the senses continue but only like children at play . . . It lets mental powers continue but only like dancers who make music into images.¹⁰

The practice of non-action not only frees man from the dominance of desires and strivings, but it teaches him a respect for, and an acceptance of, reality. The "practical man" seeks always to manipulate and control reality for his own ends and purposes. He is neither appreciative of, nor sensitive to, things as they are. He lacks a proper sense of humility before reality. Thomas Merton comments that the non-action of the Taoist is at once a yielding to reality and a recognition of its sacredness.¹¹ Chuang Tzu advises that we ought not constantly fight the nature of things, but recognize that each thing is perfect in its own way.

Buber's account of the I-Thou relation incorporates this Taoist emphasis on non-action, on letting be. He claims that genuine meeting requires that man suspend his desire to intervene, alter and transform the other. True dialogue requires acceptance, humility and openness. Only silence before the Thou leaves the Thou free, and permits man to take his stand with it in the reserve where spirit is not manifest, but is.¹² The following passage from *I and Thou* reflects Buber's debt to the Taoist doctrine of non-action:

This is an activity of the man who has become whole, an activity that has been termed doing nothing; nothing separate or partial stirs in the man any more, thus he makes no intervention in the world; it is the whole man enclosed and at rest in his wholeness that is effective—he has become an effective whole. To have won stability in this state is to be able to go out to the supreme meeting.¹³

Chuang Tzu does not hesitate to apply his warnings against the dangers of excessive strivings and anxiousness to man's ethical and religious life as well. His teaching is similar in many ways to Hasidism which so influenced Buber. Like the Hasidim, he rejects rigid ethical legalism and

10. Buber, "The Teaching of the Tao," *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

11. Thomas Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Delta Books, 1969), p. 76.

12. Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 39.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

religious rituals which prevent freedom of response and joyful spontaneity. Throughout his writings he fondly points to a past age when virtue was not seen as an imperative or duty, but was a natural response to living. Of this earlier age he comments, "They were honest and righteous without realizing that they were doing their duty. They loved one another and did not know it was love of neighbor."¹⁴ The perfect men of old, he claims, lived in a natural and unselfconscious way. Those who desire to fix man's daily life into the confines of finely drawn rules and laws only create anxieties and false conscientiousness, which prevents man from responding to the uniqueness of each life situation. Buber argues that the objective patterns and rules of the world of It are never fully adequate for an encounter with a Thou. Like Chuang Tzu, he rejects the attempt to confine the life of the spirit in the rigid patterns of accepted practices.

At the core of Chuang Tzu's philosophy is a deep respect for the uniqueness of each thing. He evidences a poet's sensitivity to the diverse values of the natural world. Each thing, he insists, has its special qualities which can be grasped when it is respected for what it is. All things have gifts of their own and varying capacities. The wise man recognizes that each reveals the Tao through its existence, through its unique way. He does not impose one narrow standard on all things. In his essay on Taoism, Buber notes that the best way to help another is to assist him to attain true freedom so that he might fulfill his unique way.¹⁵ While the "practical man" evaluates everything according to the utilitarian norms of production and efficiency, according to the norms of the world of It, the wise man possesses a love of things and persons which sees beyond their imperfections and shortcomings. In *I and Thou* Buber writes that in the eyes of the loving man, people are freed from the life of bustling activity so that good people and evil, wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly become real as they step forth in their uniqueness as a Thou.¹⁶

We find a general hostility in Chuang Tzu to excessive organization, categorization, measurement and evaluation. He was skeptical of what might be called technical intelligence or what Max Weber has characterized as the operations of scientific rationality. This skepticism is applied both to man's social life as well as to his relations to the natural world. Chuang Tzu quotes with approval the Chinese saying: "To organize is to destroy." He felt that bureaucrats and politicians introduce endless rules, procedures, distinctions and hierarchies which often end up producing strife and competition rather than harmony. He defends a simple form of social existence in which men live together without fuss and competition and free from schemes and cleverness. In effect, he issues a

14. Merton, *The Way of Chuang Tzu*, p. 16.

15. Buber, "The Teaching of the Tao," *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

16. Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 15.

warning against the dangers of institutional bureaucracies, competitive hierarchies and over organization which so characterize our modern technical society. Buber's challenge to the growing world of It, the world of impersonal organization and narrowly utilitarian ends, the world which unthinkingly accepts institutional imperatives, reflects Chuang Tzu's outlook. He insists that, as the objective and organized world of It grows, man's ability to respond in a personal way to his fellow man diminishes. We find that persons are not treated as unique individuals, encouraged to grow in their individuality, but as something to be measured, evaluated and directed in certain ways.

Another reason for Chuang Tzu's hostility to the ordering and measuring mentality is his belief that our categories often destroy the wholeness of things. In a sense, he anticipates what Whitehead called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, the substitution of abstract categories for the wholeness of lived reality. When we classify and categorize we do so for certain practical ends or purposes, and, thus, we filter out all that does not serve our end. Buber insists that the I-It attitude, which encompasses the ordering, classifying and comparing attitudes, does not bring us into contact with the fullness of the Thou. In the I-Thou relation, measurement and comparison, survey and analysis are irrelevant. In addressing another as a Thou we respond to him in his uniqueness and in his wholeness.

All of the above comparisons serve to illustrate Buber's debt to the Taoist ideas of Chuang Tzu. They bring out, as well, the fact that philosophical themes have a way of reasserting themselves as man's social and moral life fall into ways that threaten the life of the spirit, the life of simple relation, of joyous response and freedom. As Oscar Wilde notes in his interesting brief essay on Chuang Tzu, we find in his words one of the most telling critiques of the dominant values and orientation of our modern society.¹⁷ This, no doubt, explains Buber's attraction to this ancient sage.

17. Oscar Wilde, "A Chinese Sage" in *Essays by Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Hesketh Pearson (London: Methuen, 1950), p. 286.

M. Y. Berdichevsky

On the Meaning of History

SAMUEL Z. FISHMAN

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF Mikhah Yosef Berdichevsky (1865–1921) provides an occasion to assess some of the contributions of that major figure in modern Hebrew literature, whose collected works, which were published over a 35-year period, encompass twenty volumes of fiction, essays, and folklore. His reputation and influence are based on his stories of Jewish life in the villages of Eastern Europe, his “radical” break from conventional views about the nature of the Jewish people (reflected in his quarrel with Ahad Ha’am), and his research in the legends of the Jews.

Less well-known are Berdichevsky’s significant observations about the study of Jewish history, the means by which it is transmitted, and the role it fulfills in life of the people. His first published work, “*Toldot Yeshivat Eẓ Ḥayyim*,” in Naḥum Sokolow’s, *He’asif* (III, 1887, 231–242), was none other than an historical essay, and, throughout his life, an important part of his critical writings dealt with the meaning and significance of Jewish history and the dynamics of the relationship between past and present.

The early writings of Berdichevsky reveal him as the beneficiary of close to a century of Haskalah literature. He knew both the works of the Hebraists who had preceded him and the research of the German-Jewish scholars associated with *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. From the outset, Berdichevsky found reason to criticize the prevailing assumptions of their studies in Jewish history, and pointed out the relatively narrow boundaries within which they worked and the limited audience for whom they wrote. Seeing a tendentious quality in their interpretations of scholarly material, he questioned the soundness of their conclusions and the authenticity of their portrayals of the Jewish past.

For reasons of temperament and circumstance, Berdichevsky did not pursue his criticism of nineteenth century Jewish historiography with a systematic effort of his own, although there is evidence that by as early as 1888 he had undertaken several books on Jewish history (mentioned in his “Letters to A. Kaminka,” *Genazim*, I, 1961, pp. 168–182). Other kinds of literary endeavor marked the most prolific years of his life, and when he did turn to scholarly endeavor he devoted his energies to a special concern, the collection and interpretations of Jewish legends and folklore. In this effort he sought to realize the insights and goals he had enunciated in his essays.

SAMUEL Z. FISHMAN is director of Israel and Community Affairs for the B’nai B’rith Hillel Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The first of these, "*Toldot Yeshivat Ez Hayyim*" is a historical essay, describing the development of the Volozhin yeshivah from its beginnings in 1803 to the author's own time. He organizes his description chronologically, dividing it into periods according to each generation of yeshivah scholars. He then outlines the contribution of each *rosh yeshivah* to the character and curriculum of the school. When Berdichevsky came to Volozhin in 1885 he found it in a relatively prosperous state, with four hundred students of varying ages and backgrounds. Despite the thoroughly traditional quality of the formal curriculum, he describes the yeshivah atmosphere as challenging and enriching, and speaks in glowing terms of the beauty of the school and of the love for Torah and learning which characterized it.

The varied background of the students provided him with an after-hours opportunity for sharing the fragments of Haskalah learning which many of them could offer. They exchanged lessons in foreign languages and literature, especially Russian and German. They also taught one another such subjects as Hebrew grammar, mathematics, science, philosophy, and history.

Also, in 1887, there appeared the first evidence of Berdichevsky's dissatisfaction with the synchronic quality of traditional Jewish learning. In "*Sefer Toledot*," an article which he wrote under the pseudonym of Ibn R.M.A., and which appeared in *Hameliz*, he expresses his amazement over the failure of learned rabbis and scholars, teachers of the "people of the book," to perceive the dimensions of Jewish history. "Is this not a strange and astonishing sight, for which we know no parallel? Whence its source and origin?" (XXVIII, No. 142, 26 June, 1887.)

This failure was the basis of Berdichevsky's principal complaint about the Volozhin yeshivah, and in articles published under two other pseudonyms he further explored the weaknesses of yeshivah education. The first is an essay called "*Olam Ha'azilut*" ("The World of Spirituality"), signed Y. B. M., and published in 1888 in Eliezer Atlas' *Hakerem*; the others are in a series called "*Zeror Mikhtavim*" ("A Packet of Letters"), printed in six installments in 1888 in *Hameliz* under the name of Bar-be-rav. In the essay in *Hakerem*, Berdichevsky displays his familiarity with the works of prominent German-Jewish scholars, referring specifically to Graetz, Zunz, Herzfeld, Jost, and Frankel. He also mentions Smolenskin's historical essay, "*Am Olam*," and Sokolow's study of anti-Semitism, *Sinat Olam Le'am Olam*.

He then turns to the matter of instruction in Jewish history, and notes the complete neglect of this subject at Volozhin. He admits that the yeshivah cannot be turned into a German-style rabbinical seminary, but asks:

How will the *rosh yeshivah* justify himself if we ask him why he does not teach them the history of Israel? In showing the difference between the

spirit of Israel and that of the other people who have been absorbed by the stream of history and in showing Israel's wonderful traits and virtues, history will ignite in the heart of the students a feeling of love for their people; through history their eyes will be opened and they will know their people and its needs. It is a terrible thing, but these men who are leaders of the nation and of Judaism do not know what Israel is or what Judaism is (*"Olam Ha'azilut," Hakerem*, 1888, p. 65).

In the series of "Letters" sent to *Hameliz* under the name of Barbe-rav, Berdichevsky complains about the utter lack of order and system in the regimen of studies. Each student tries his hand at whatever comes his way, with no sense of relationship between the various disciplines. In one of these pieces he discloses a plan to establish an after-hours study group for the learning of Jewish history:

There has been established at Volozhin a society for the Science of Israel and its history; during the long nights after the completion of the study period in the yeshivah the members will gather together at the house of one of the students who excels in that subject, and he will instruct them in the study of Israel's history and literature (*Hameliz*, XXVIII, No. 30, 17 February 1888).

S. Werses has pointed out in, *"Haḥasidut Be'olamo Shel Berdichevsky"* (*Molad*, I, No. 4, 1968) that Berdichevsky was among the first writers to call for an extensive study of the history and literature of Hasidism. Berdichevsky's three-part essay, in the 1888 edition of *He'asif*, *"Letoldot Gedolei Yisroel,"* presents, in its final section, a study of the Hasidic Rabbi, Naḥman of Bratislav (1772–1810), and is illustrative of this early interest. It opens with a spirited advocacy of historical study as the most important of all scholarly endeavors, especially where the Jews are concerned. He writes that the absence of a shared land and language makes the awareness of a common past a crucial element for binding together the Jewish people:

Scholars who have devoted themselves to measuring the value of science's influence on man's intellectual development have taught that there is no learning in the world which can instruct a man like the learning of history, and though all learning enlarges man's knowledge and enriches his understanding with correct knowledge, history has an extra quality because it lets a man clearly perceive the ways of the world, the regimens of life, and the pathways of historical events. And if the scholars of other peoples have agreed to place it in the first rank as a "teacher of life," how much more are we, the House of Israel, obliged to love, enlarge, and adorn it. Besides being a mirror to show us our defects and hopes, it will be of great utility for our revival and rebirth. Other peoples are bound together by various traditions and bonds, by the strands of a single language, by the covenant of a single regimen, by the bonds of a single civil order; but what does Israel have in its world but the four ells of its Torah and its history?

This history book of Israel will tell us all our past events; it will set before our eyes our scholars and learned men, spiritual heroes who have enlightened the whole world with their erudition. Thus, one portion of history is better for us than nine portions of research and philosophizing on the questions of life, of which our literature is full these days. Even more, this profession which I have touched upon is an ever-flowing stream

and a mine of precious jewels as yet untouched; even the wise Graetz, that great guide who has gathered the history of Israel into his hand, has passed too quickly over the history of those latter-day sages who have so expanded our Talmudic literature; he dismisses them in his book with two or three lines (*"Letoldot Gedolei Yisroel," He'asif*, IV, 1888, part 3, p. 55).

Berdichevsky's estrangement from traditional patterns of thought stands out in his rhetorical question, "What does Israel have in its world but the four ells of its Torah and its history?" Anyone within the confines of those "four ells of Torah" could not have asked such a question; Berdichevsky, clearly, directed his eyes toward "history" as the source of inspiration and guidance. Although disagreeing with Graetz's neglect of certain subjects, he is wholly committed to his cause and the assumptions which underlie it.

In introducing the section on Rabbi Naḥman of Bratislav, Berdichevsky goes into greater detail regarding the interests of Graetz and other German-Jewish scholars, and charges them with a lack of proportion. They give much attention to the accomplishments of Jews in contact with European culture, but pass over major developments in the Jewish world with barely a nod. Berdichevsky suspects them of slanted history-writing, with an emphasis on Haskalah or Reform as the only view of Judaism that is authentic and legitimate. He claims that he would reject the use of history for advocating specific causes, and defends his call for research in Hasidism as motivated only by a love for the unadorned truth. He asks, why have historians, who have dealt with such great Jewish controversies as those between Jacob Emden (1697–1776) and Jonathan Eybeschütz (1690–1764), or between the Vilna Gaon (1720–1797) and the Baal Shem Tov (1700–1760), overlooked the famous intra-Hasidic quarrel between Rabbi Naḥman of Bratislav and Rabbi Aryeh Loeb of Spola (d. 1811)?

The reason is that the research and interpretation of our people's history has until this time been almost exclusively in the hands of our people's Western (i.e., German) scholars, who have admittedly done great and praiseworthy things in this profession; far be it from us to deprive them of their due or deprecate their worth; but in a place where the truth is dishonored one does not distribute honors by majority rule, and for the sake of truth we must admit that they have erred in one matter. They were lengthy where they should have been brief and brief where they should have been lengthy; on one miniscule point of some evil decree in a certain country, on one entirely inconsequential matter, on the biography of any one preacher among ten who wrote something in a European language, they write whole chapters and lengthy researches. By contrast, they do not mention at all, or merely in passing, the influence of our greatest men who have attained the heights among millions of our brethren, for these things are hidden from them.

But lack of knowledge is no excuse, and does any historian have the right to say, "This I did not see, that I did not hear, this matter is far removed, or that matter is improper; therefore I will not make any comment at all?" Whether you approve of a matter or not, Mr. Scholar, is a separate question, and does not concern us here; you should pursue a matter that you dislike as you would one that you like; you must follow

up, in a worthy manner, men whose impact on their contemporaries is obvious; you must consider the actions they have taken and the history of those actions, and with the same deep and penetrating perspicacity with which we consider the generation of the Me'asefim or any other period whose spirit rests upon the Maskilim.

A historian is obligated to consider the generation of Rabbi Nahman of Bratislav and his influence upon the Hasidim of his time. Admittedly, it is hard in this matter to satisfy all opinions without coming within a hairsbreadth of impinging upon the sacred belief of one or another party. The writer of these lines has not elevated himself to judge and critic, as do most of the historians among our people who direct their historical research according to their own spirit and method; but I have set as my goal to penetrate the spirit of these famous men with whom my article deals, to set forth all of their accomplishments as seen from their books and acts. My entire purpose is to learn and to know what they said and what they thought; I have set out neither to praise nor to curse, but only to do research for its own sake (*"Letoldot Gedolei Yisroel," Ibid.*, p. 66).

Toward the end of the essay, Berdichevsky declares his credo as a scholarly historian, epitomizing his naïve and youthful conviction that somehow he will escape the shoals upon which so many other advocates of "objective" history have foundered:

Neither a comely and charming bride nor an ugly and rejected one, but a bride exactly as she is; if you like it, good, and if not, also good. The writer of these lines has not considered for even a moment to judge and teach the matter as good or bad; I have not engaged in idleness nor have I erred through inattention, but whatever I have researched and examined and found—that shall I tell. It is my obligation and I will fulfill it! (*Ibid.*, p. 70).

A further criticism of the manner in which German-Jewish historians defined their area of endeavor appears in the article "*Nahkorah*," published in 1888 in *Hamagid*. Here Berdichevsky's specific concern is with the notion that the only Jewish writing worthy of the name "literature" is that which has been produced under the aegis of the Haskalah. He calls for writers and scholars to come out of their private world,

... to tie all branches of our literature to a single root in a manner that it will not be called the literature of the Haskalah but, rather, the literature of the people, including the traditional part; to bring into the sphere of literature critical study of all rabbinic, Hasidic, and sermonic literature; to judge each book according to its content; and to include research in the history and criticism of Hasidism; to deal in depth with the history of great teachers in such a way that the story of the lovely heifer, Henriette Herz, will not be more precious to us than the history of one of the pillars of the Torah. History is a universal matter, and not the possession of one party, and far be it from us to prefer the generation of the Me'asefim over that of the Hasidim, and let there be no distinction between Haskalah and Hasidism, or between Hasidim and Mitnagdim; let the nation and all of Judaism be always before our eyes (*Hamagid*, XXXII, No. 32, 16 August 1888).

These articles reveal Berdichevsky's conception of history as primarily a concern for biography and literature; in this he follows in the footsteps of Zunz and Graetz. What he asks for is a reconsideration of

the criteria by which individuals are chosen for biographical study, preferring the great and influential figures of traditional learning to the glittering personalities of the German Haskalah. Berdichevsky also calls for an enlargement of the definition of Jewish literature, rejecting the notion that works which do not fit into a modern European genre should be brushed aside or ignored. Rabbinic law, midrash, aggadah, and Hasidic legend are authentically representative of the Jewish spirit, and they must be fully considered when investigating the character of Jewish literature.

This consideration of representative works from the first two or three years of Berdichevsky's journalistic career shows that the search for a meaningful past was a dominant theme in his earliest publications. While stimulated by the writings of earlier historians, he had already begun to turn away from some of the assumptions which underlay their work. The source of his dissatisfaction was as much instinct as training, for whatever knowledge he acquired during this period was almost entirely autodidactic, the evening-hours study group at the Volozhin yeshivah notwithstanding.

Introducing: Ernst Bloch

HARRY SLOCHOWER

IN HIS PUBLISHED WRITINGS, ERNST BLOCH DOES not indicate the role which Judaism played in his life as a Jew, nor its bearing on the development of his thinking. However, references to the Hebrew Prophets, to the Book of Job, to Moses, and to Israel abound in his work, especially in his major study, "The Principle of Hope" (*Das Prinzip der Hoffnung*). I will try to show that some of his basic orientations are profoundly "Jewish."

Man On His Own is the first of Ernst Bloch's publications to appear in this country.¹ It consists of short, but representative selections (in translation from several of his studies, mainly from his "Spirit of Utopia" (1918) and "The Principle of Hope" (1955-1958).

Man On His Own introduces to us an extraordinary personality and outlines some of the most seminal ideas in our time. A Jew and a long-time Marxist, Bloch has won, to begin with, the enthusiastic dedication of the younger "radical" Christian theologians who see in him a wholesome antidote to Martin Heidegger. In contrast to Heidegger, Bloch finds in religion the seeds of social-revolutionary protest. His central notion is that man is one who has the impulse of Expectation (*Impuls der Erwartung*), who hopes and works for the opening up of new creative paths through social action. This theme is developed in "The Principle of Hope," which Bloch wrote in this country in the late '30s, after he left Nazi Germany.²

Bloch's writings embrace an amazingly wide area, from the religious-philosophical to the social-cultural. Furthermore, and the resonance of his appeal arises from this level, this octogenarian (now over 86) writes in a poetic prose, carried by a youthful buoyancy. His "argument" takes

1. Ernst Bloch, *Man On His Own. Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*. Foreword by Harvey Cox. Introduction by Jürgen Moltmann. Translated by E. B. Ashton. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970). Page numbers refer to this edition.

Two other books by Bloch have thus far been published here: *A Philosophy of the Future* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) and *On Karl Marx* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971).

2. In the Germany of the '20s, Bloch worked closely with Georg Simmel, and his circle of friends included Karl Jaspers, Georg Lucasc, Bertold Brecht and Walter Benjamin. Following his return to Germany in the '40s, Bloch was appointed Professor at the University of Leipzig, but the religious tenor of his Marxism was not "relevant" in East Germany. Bloch is now Visiting Professor at the University of Tübingen in West Germany.

HARRY SLOCHOWER is editor of "American Imago" and an analyst in private practice.

the form of the metaphor, the symbol and analogy, of the proverb, homily and Hasidic legend. His imagery often produces incongruous juxtapositions that open up unexpected, startling perspectives.

Bloch's poetic diction reminds one of George Santayana's, but with this difference: his thought is permeated by a revolutionary dialectic which would combine Marx and Engels with Moses and the Hebrew Prophets, as well as with St. Paul and St. Augustine. That is, Bloch presents a kind of theology for Social Revolution, pointing to the Messianic underground in Marxism and to the social-revolutionary temper in early Hebraic and Christian thought.³

Even as Bloch regards Marxism as belonging with the highest levels of philosophical and social thought, he argues that it merits this position only if the religious and metaphysical dimensions are intertwined with it. Marx, he writes, did not think the productive forces through "in principle, and metaphysically. . ." (35). The Marxian dialectic "has voided the economy, but the soul and faith it was to make room for are missing" (39). We need to ask what the Marxist society is *for*. This "for" is found in Baal-Shem, in the Utopian Socialists, such as Weitling and Baader, in "Tolstoy's world of love . . . the new puissance of Dostoyevsky's human encounters . . . mankind's way home through the dark of the world" (40). This idea and feeling are expressed in Bloch's characteristic metaphoric manner:

It is as Baal-Shem says: the Messiah cannot come until all his guests are seated at the table—and this is first the table of labor, then the one beyond labor, but immediately after, the table of the Lord. The kingdom of brotherly love provides the organization of the world with its ultimate metaphysical guidance (41).

Bloch's Human Drama: Genesis Is Still To Come

Among Bloch's startling formulations is the one that the Human Drama has not yet had its First Act: It is neither in the Old Testament *Bereshis*, nor in the New Testament *Logos*; nor in the Faustian *Tat*, nor in the Freudian *Wunsch*. He glosses the ancient warning *Principii obstat* as: "Keep faith with the beginning, whose genesis is still to come" (92). Here, Bloch leans on the Mosaic and the Hebraic tradition of the Prophets. With Moses, there took place "a leap in religious consciousness," which had the nature of rebellion, beginning with the Exodus from Egypt, and Moses became "the first heros eponymos. . ." (168). Moses preached *Deus Spes*, the promise in hope and the hope in promise. Simi-

3. Bloch assigns to Marxian "productive forces" the same universal and mythic status which Hegel claimed for his "Idea." He sees Marxism as "*near to being a (Kantian) Critique of Pure Reason for which no Critique of Practical Reason has yet been written*" (39). (Italics in original.) Bloch also places Marx in apposition to Freud: "Marx extracts the economic from the psychological, and derives the psychological from the economic" (37).

larly, the Prophets rarely mention the God of Creation, and the greatest of Cabbalists (Isaac Lurya, 1534–1582) went so far as “to introduce the idea of exile into the doctrine of Creation itself. . .” (170, 173, 174; my italics). Instead of the Dawn of Creation, we get “the dream of the end, of the day of deliverance, whose only link with the beginning is dialectical, as with a primal Egypt that has to be voided.” Bloch’s teleological eschatology draws on the passage in Exodus: “I Shall Be What I Shall Be.” This “put a God from the end of days, one whose being was the quality of the future on the threshold of Yahweh’s appearance” (173). (A similar point is made by Max Weber in *Ancient Judaism*.) In the center, then, of the human drama is what I have elsewhere termed⁴ the Quest and the Epilogue in the human journey which Bloch sees conspicuously expressed by Moses and the Prophets, by subterranean chiliastic currents within Christianity, and by Marxism.

For Bloch, Moses and the Prophets also foreshadow Marxism in their stress on historical change leading towards the Kingdom of the classless society. He interprets Augustine similarly. In his work, truth appears, not “in motionless objective facts . . . but in process” (117). In it, “history comes to be a *saving* history in the direction of the kingdom . . . on the basis of the Stoic unity of mankind” (128). The City of God is thought of as an earthly and political ideal:

Civitas Dei was conceived quite literally as part of heaven on earth . . . in short, the hope for a spiritual rebirth of more and more human beings—turns Augustine’s City of God into a political utopia (132).

Here, transcendence takes place within the framework of human history:

Socialis vita sanctorum is a historic-utopian transcendence . . . because it is entwined with the productive hope of *human history*. . . (132).

“Heaven” is understood “as a *hypostasized anticipation of being-for-itself*” (213). The City of God is not a final state:

The seventh day of Creation is still vacant, and Augustine marks it with his most centrally utopian words: ‘We ourselves shall be the seventh day—*Dies septimus nos ipsi erimus*’ (132).

As a Marxist, Bloch is keenly aware that religion (Pauline Christianity in particular), has been used to support authoritarian reaction, that the Church has been betraying God to man (155, 154). But, he urges, Christianity began as social protest among “the laboring and heavy laden” (152) and he sees a basic rebellious temper in religion. In it, desire has been “total . . . mindful of a perfection that does not exist” (163–164). It is only in religion that there lives “the unfinished question” (164). Messianism is “the salt of the earth,” and inherent to Christian Messianism is its explosive “Promethean revolt,” its “radical longing” (163, 152, 153, 162). True religion is transcendent, and dis-

4. *Mythopoesis* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).

tances itself from the merchants and commodores of the world. Bloch quotes with approval Karl Barth's word that "the divine speaks a constant 'No' into the world" (154). For Bloch, part of original sin lies in "contentment with the world . . . coldness of the heart . . . the unfeeling stage of our kingdom" (62).

In "The Principle of Hope," we read: "Where there is hope there is religion" (19, 152). And hope presupposes perpetual dissatisfaction with the temporal present and with any fixed point. This thought goes back to Bloch's study of Thomas Münzer, one of the leaders of the Peasants' Rebellion, whom the title identifies as *The Theologian of Revolution* (1921), and who, along with the Hussites and Joachimites is one of the chiliasts of the religious movement.

Bloch views the key function of socialism as providing *the necessary means* for achieving the Christian *oikoumene*: "Socialism is the road to it, the new finally realizable inheritance of what was meant by emancipation within and peace without" (146). Nor is the idea foreign to Marxism, at least not to Engels:

What the young Engels said in 1842, only a few years before the Communist Manifesto, has a distinctly Joachimite ring to it: "The self-assurance of mankind, the new Grail, about whose throne exultant nations gather. . . This is our vocation: To become the Templars of the Grail, to gird the sword about our loins in its behalf, and joyfully to risk our lives in this last holy war that will be followed by the millenium of freedom" (141).⁵

What gives reality its true dimension, Bloch states, is the horizon of the future. And it is there where God is. Therefore, to say that God exists as a distinct being is superstition, is to deny His transcendence. (Paul Tillich argues in a similar vein.) God is ahead of us and realizes Himself endlessly in His futuristic creations. This was recognized by Thomas Münzer, by Joachim di Fiore and by the Anabaptists whom Bloch is fond of quoting.

In his "The Principle of Hope" Bloch writes that we begin empty. But, "to be" points to a future perfect. This dialectic entails historical change, and here lies the principle of hope.

This principle has a moving platform and its movement hinges on the incessant quest, a quest buoyed by dissent. In this sense, Bloch writes, atheism is the premise of religious utopianism and "*without atheism there is no room for messianism*" (italics in original (162)). Indeed, the Serpent of Paradise becomes a "Saviour" (191). Bloch cites Jesus who called the serpent

that subterranean-subversive healing creature. . . The serpent is both the arch-enemy fought and conquered by Apollo, by Siegfried, by Michael, and the snake of salvation twining round the staff of Aesculapius, the Egyptian Uraeus snake on diadems and on the sun, a magic sign to ward

5. Similarly, Teilhard de Chardin also sees the Marxist philosophy of history as neo-Humanistic and as identical with the Christian notion of "incarnation."

off hostile powers. Above all, the serpent cult prevailed for a long time in Israel. . . (194).

In a section, 'Odysseus Did Not Die In Ithaca' (from Volume II of "The Principle of Hope," Bloch writes eloquently on the value of being "ever outward bound," as was Odysseus, praising him for this quality more explicitly than Dante did in *The Inferno*. Odysseus' life, Bloch writes

becomes synonymous with a constant breaking of bounds . . . to leap the barrier . . . the goal of Dante's Odysseus—to know oneself in action, to be ever outward bound. . . The goal lies ahead . . . in a world not yet humanized, among men who do not yet own a world adequate to the human condition. It lies ahead—in spite of as well as because of, the perilous crossing.

Bloch and Judaism

As mentioned before, in his work Bloch discusses Judaism only marginally.⁶ Yet, underlying his interpretation of God and the Prophets, of Moses and Job is the Hebraic idea of The Promise in which the Messiah comes only once—in the future. For Bloch, this idea entails dissatisfaction with the here and now; it is to be "ever outward bound." Now, this very condition spells The Promise. Its value consists in that it acts as a spur towards the enactment of social justice and human freedom.

Here is the context of Bloch's "Hebraic" notion of God. By contrast with a localized, corporeal Baal, God's characteristic is unrest of the spirit, *Geist*.⁷ A more dramatic example of this temper is Bloch's interpretation of the Book of Job, in which he breaks with the traditional "religious" view of Job as a pious man who is redeemed because he says *al het*. Instead, Bloch sees Job as vindicated by the Hebrew God precisely because he rebels.⁸ He calls Job "the Hebrew Prometheus," in whose rebellious hope "the Exodus grows radical" (171).

6. A note on Bloch's stand on Israel: "The Principle of Hope," written before the establishment of Israel as a state, contains some peripheral reservations. However, since then, and especially today, his view of Israel is "thoroughly positive" (Personal communication, June 26, 1971). This position was expressed earlier in an address in Frankfurt a/M on June 27, 1967. There Bloch said:

A tiny people was to be strangled . . . like rats . . . because this people did not want to become a victim, it is placed (by some) in the same light as the murderer Hitler. . . The right to a homeland should in no way be . . . nationalistic. . . . It is not colonialism for the Israelis to occupy their Jerusalem, it is not the same as when the English occupy Hong Kong. . . Is not a symbiosis possible in the Israeli idea . . . to be sure, with Israel maintaining autonomy. . . ? The presupposition is an existence of the left on both sides and their socialistic . . . idea working together. . . ." In: *Politische Messungen, Pestzeit, Vormärz* (Frankfurt a/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), p. 4199ff.

7. Bloch's conception is very nearly identical with the notion of "The Blessing" in Thomas Mann's monumental epic, *Joseph and His Brothers*. This point is developed in my *Thomas Mann's Joseph Story. An Interpretation* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1938. Reprinted by Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York, 1970).

8. In this connection, I want to refer to the study by Dr. Robert Gordis, *Book of God and Man. Study of Job* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), where a similar con-

This idea also makes itself felt in Bloch's book on Karl Marx. He does not mention the fact that Marx was a Jew, yet, the features which he stresses in Marx's system are an organic part of the Jewish sociological-philosophic tradition: the critical principle in the service of Humanity, the notion of Hope in the future, and the concrete, immanent nature of this Hope.⁹

Finally, Bloch's picture of the unfinished and unfinishable character of the human quest is in the spirit of the curve of Jewish history (which, as Erich Kahler puts it, begins with exile), as well as with the nature of the human condition itself which knows no resting point.

In his *Stundenbuch*, Rilke's monk prays that the Lord may give every man his own death. Bloch's hope is that socialism may give every man his own life. The eminently practical goal and basic motive of socialist ideology is "to give to every man not just a job, but his own distress, boredom, wretchedness, misery, and darkness, his own buried, summoning light. . . ." (60).

Bloch states that there is no hope without anxiety, and no anxiety without hope. (This comes close to Freud's later ego-concept of anxiety.) Here, we find Bloch's dramatic distancing from Martin Heidegger. And he characterizes Heidegger's "ontology of anxiety" (his concept of *Sorge*) as the expression of a society which, with its wars and wartime production, "is going under."¹⁰ In contrast, Ernst Bloch sees man engaged in a "dream towards what is ahead" (*Traum nach Vorwärts*). This defines Bloch's special use of the term "Utopia" to mean "a redemption" that is never final, but always "on the way" (*unterwegs*). God, too, is a "Not-yet-being" (164).

One of Spinoza's axioms is that "Man thinks." For Ernst Cassirer, man is a "symbolical animal." Freud sees man as one who wishes. For Bloch, man is a thinking and symbolical being who wishes and hopes. Where Freud focuses on what is no longer, or may never become, conscious, Bloch dwells on what has not yet become conscious. For him, as for Marx, the root is Man. With this, he would wed the Christian eschatology of Hope and the Hebraic rebellious quest towards an approximation of the liberating human condition.

clusion is reached independently. This position is also developed in the chapter on Job ("Hebrew Memory of a Chosen God") in my *Mythopoesis*, *loc. cit.*

9. Ernst Bloch, *On Karl Marx* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971). See sections, "Karl Marx and Humanity," "The Material of Hope," and "Concrete Utopia."

10. In his Foreword to *Man On His Own*, Harvey Cox writes (p. 18):

I have often speculated on how different theology would be today if Ernst Bloch, rather than Martin Heidegger, had been our conversation partner for the past twenty years. Would we be as miserably lacking as we are in a theologically grounded social ethic? Would we be as disastrously out of touch with the revolution that is transforming the third world. . . . Would we have needed the catharsis of the death-of-God theology? . . . Might we have produced a theology that was truly radical in its impact on the world and not just its rhetoric?

A Theologian's Views on Politics

Political Expectation. By PAUL TIL-
LICH. Ed. by James Luther Adams.
Harper and Row. New York, N.Y.,
1971. 187 pp. \$5.95.

Reviewed by JOHN C. BENNETT

THIS is chiefly a volume of translations of Paul Tillich's political writings soon after the First World War, during the period of the Weimar Republic. It has a helpful introduction by James Luther Adams, who is both the editor and the translator of several of the chapters. The book fills real gaps in the Tillich corpus available in English, and some of these chapters, especially those on "Religious Socialism" and on utopianism, have much to say to our present condition. There is a most interesting contrast between the chapters written before Tillich's American experience and the two at the end of the book, "Shadow and Substance: A Theory of Power" and "The Political Meaning of Utopia" which reflect his later experience. The former of these, a lecture delivered to the Graduate School of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, illustrates his response to the kind of audiences to which Tillich became accustomed in the United States and which would not have understood the first chapters of this book! In those chapters, Tillich deals in abstract concepts which are seldom related to any concrete events or movements or facts, whereas the later chapters are full of illustrations from contemporary history; he even occasionally tells an anecdote out of his experience.

Readers of many of the pages of the early writings will need to know about Tillich's special cate-

gories and concepts. Even if they do, they will sometimes find them rather opaque because Tillich is writing for such a different situation. The title of the book should not lead one to expect any light on what lies ahead of us politically today; Tillich can only help us in relating hope for the future to the ambiguities that are always present when hopes are realized, in combining resolute commitment to a particular political decision to realistic sophistication. In this respect there is great similarity between Tillich and the "realism" associated with Reinhold Niebuhr, except that Tillich assigns a more positive role to utopian expectation, as providing the energy for change, than Niebuhr did after his publication of *Moral Man and Immoral Society*; though the final paragraph does seem to me to resemble Tillich's discussion of Utopia. In that paragraph, Niebuhr says that the illusion that man can achieve perfect justice is necessary if justice is to be approximated. Then he says: "The illusion is dangerous because it encourages terrible fanaticisms. It must be brought under the control of reason. One can only hope that reason will not destroy it before its work is done." (p. 277) Niebuhr came to regret that passage, but in a tempered form the same idea is present in Tillich's lectures on "The Political Meaning of Utopia," delivered in Berlin in 1951. Tillich analyzes the strength and weakness of utopia much more carefully, but he does see in it the source of vision of new possibilities and then he warns that utopia does create illusions which result in disillusionment against which the utopians may protect themselves by means of terror. There is also in-

cluded a careful discussion of the dialectic of social hope that is most relevant to the current disillusionment concerning the tendency of "realism" to encourage conservatism.

Soon after Tillich settled in this country and joined the faculty of Union Theological Seminary he became a very active member of "The Fellowship of Socialist Christians" of which Niebuhr was the chief founder and major prophet. He felt that this movement was very similar to the Religious Socialism of which he, himself, had been the major prophet in Germany in the 1920s. The two chapters here on "Religious Socialism" are invaluable in giving substance to this abstraction, which often appears in Tillich's other books. I can only summarize, in much simpler statements, Tillich's most careful and difficult analysis of his special categories and concepts.

Religious Socialism is an attempt to correct both the conservatism of the churches, which he describes with radical polemics, and the individualism and the non-historical and non-political character of Existentialism with which Tillich is often associated. It is strongly dialectical because, while it fully accepts the Socialistic criticisms of Capitalism, it does not absolutize any particular Socialistic pattern for the future. The religious aspect of Religious Socialism is not denominational or institutionally Christian; it is openness to the transcendent as the source of judgment and of grace in every historical moment. This openness to the transcendent is what Tillich calls "Theonomy." Religious Socialism depends a great deal on Marxist historical dialectics. Thus, it appeals to the emphasis of the early Marx on "estrangement," but finds this much too limited to the

effects of capitalism, instead of reflecting the universal human situation of which the "fall" is a symbol. Religious Socialism also rejects the tendency of later Marxism to develop a system of mechanical, rather than dialectical, materialism. Religious Socialism always emphasizes the place of human freedom, of the revolutionary will within the determining factors in history. Religious Socialism is very much aware of the terror of Stalinism and of the danger that, in order to overcome disillusionment, any Marxist regime may resort to terror, and so its polemics are also addressed to Communist movements and parties. Religious Socialism does identify itself with the proletariat in its struggle for justice, politically, in the German situation of the 1920s, but it does not admit an absolute or permanent alliance with any political party. Tillich's position here is a difficult one to maintain but this is part of the openness to the transcendent that keeps Religious Socialism different from most other forms of Socialism. The discussion is highly theoretical, and in these chapters Tillich nowhere reveals the human realities that cause him to be indignant against capitalistic injustice, but which are taken for granted. His expressions of indignation are usually directed against the way in which the churches are made captive by the capitalistic powers.

The following passage will give some idea of Tillich's argument and, especially, of the dialectical nature of Religious Socialism:

Religious Socialism believes that its most decisive religious task in behalf of the present society is to participate in exposing and combating a demonic capitalism. Accordingly, it allies itself with the struggling proletariat whose original vocation it acknowledges. At the same time, however, it knows that the pro-

letariat may lose its "calling," hence it directs a radically religious criticism against the profanizations and demonizations occurring within socialism itself. In the struggle against a demonized society and for a meaningful society, Religious Socialism discerns a necessary expression for the expectation of the Kingdom of God. But it repudiates the identification of socialism with the kingdom of God just as it rejects religious indifference towards constructive tasks within this world. (p. 50)

One of Tillich's most emphasized concepts is *Kairos*, the idea of the expected fulfillment of a particular moment of time. In the 1920s, he believed that, in Germany, the *Kairos* called for the overcoming of capitalism by socialism, with all the reservations with which his Religious Socialism surrounds socialism. He does not discuss the failure of Religious Socialism and the triumph, for a time, of the bogus and diabolical National Socialism. Tillich's technical use of the word "demonic" keeps it from being a word of passionate moral rejection and, so, we have to use a stronger word for the movement that caused Tillich to become an exile. He was one of the most fortunate of all exiles, as he became one of the great lights, one of the most accepted of all thinkers, in his new country. His experience here changed him, changed his style and made him a much more empirical thinker. It also changed his view of the *Kairos*. He became adjusted to the mixed economy of the New Deal and of what has followed, and lost his deep interest in socialism and even in politics that we find in this book. The strangeness and complexity of American politics became too much for him. In principle, he held to the political responsibility of religious men, but in the last page of this book (in 1951) he says that his own per-

sonal feeling "is that today we live in a period in which the *Kairos*, the right time of realization, lies ahead of us in the invisible future, and a void, an unfulfilled space, a vacuum surrounds us." (p. 180) However, in this void he realized that there were responsibilities to work against such evils as nuclear war. He says that "a war without a possible victor and without a possible reunion of the separated is not a war but merely a catastrophe." (p. 123) Perhaps he had given too much emphasis to the one *Kairos* interpreted in Marxist terms that he believed fitted Germany after the First World War; otherwise he might have come to see that there are several *Kairoi*, different for different countries or continents. Even his mind, that compassed so many aspects of human experience, was not free from a tendency to see the world from a European, even a German, point of view. Other minds can helpfully relate his major insights to new visions of the *Kairoi* of our time. I have in mind especially the way in which we relate the continuing ambiguities discerned by realism to the vision of possibilities and the hope which are essential for social achievements.

JOHN C. BENNETT is *President-emeritus of Union Theological Seminary and visiting professor of Christian ethics of the Pacific School of Religion.*



A Changed Jewry

Les Juifs. By ALAIN GUICHARD. Bernard Grasset. Paris, 1971. Pp. 267.

Reviewed by HENRY WALTER BRANN

JEWISH history has always been full of surprises, paradoxes and unexpected developments, one of them being the sudden shift of Jewish significance from one country to an-

other. The recent emergence of French Judaism as an important factor among world Jewry is a case in point. The French Jewish community has become the largest group of Jews in Western Europe, and its whole character has been considerably transformed.

No wonder, then, that in the last few years, despite the Gaullist attack against Israel and the revival of a dormant French anti-Semitism, a great many interesting books on Judaism and the Jews have been published in France. Alain Guichard's complex study of French Jewry in search of itself is, by far, the most objective one, because the author, as a non-Jew, has no ax to grind. He is a respected contributor to the prestigious newspaper, *Le Monde*, which, in recent times, has published more relevant material on Judaism than was ever printed in any non-Jewish daily and weekly, inserting even American-type analyses of every forthcoming Jewish religious holiday—a habit unheard of in any Western or Central European country in pre-Hitler days.

Guichard traces the origin of French Jewry back to antiquity and the early Middle Ages, showing that the "long struggle against assimilation" started as early as the settlement of Jacob's family in Egypt under Joseph. The specific development of French Jewry starts with the period of emancipation during the French Revolution; it reaches its climax in our time with the grand migration of the North African Jews to the French homeland. At the outbreak of the French Revolution, religious Judaism elsewhere in Europe was penetrated by a strong Hasidic trend, but French Jews kept out of it, because, in their overwhelming majority, they were inebriated by their newly won liberty as free and equal citizens.

But, during the Reign of Terror, this enthusiasm was dampened, and the observance of the Shabbat frequently became an act of heroism. Moreover, in Alsace, anti-Semitism persisted among the rural population. Napoleon, though praised by some Jewish historians for his hierarchic organization of French Judaism, thus giving Jewish religious worship a legal basis for more than a century, is attacked by Guichard as sharing all the anti-Semitic prejudices of his caste. According to Count Mele, the Corsican usurper made this cynical statement: "I do not intend to remove from that race, which alone seems to be excepted from redemption, the curse which was imposed on them by divine providence." He did not consider the Jews as citizens equal to the others, and the much-heralded convocation of the "Great Sanhedrin" served only to make the Jews in their entirety accept and endorse rules and regulations promulgated by an assembly of notables. Despite their liberal appearance, some of these regulations were in contradiction to certain traditional Jewish rules, especially in regard to mixed marriages. In 1808, the emperor issued a decree on the "suppression of abuses ascribed to the Jews" which abolished parts of their rights won by the Revolution and forbade them to settle in Alsace unless they were already residents of that province; it, furthermore, deprived them of the possibility which existed for all non-Jews, of buying a substitute for those compelled to do military service. This decree, (called "the infamous decree"), though not continued by Napoleon's successor, Louis XVIII, revealed the spirit of the Napoleonic reform which aimed at the disappearance of Judaism as a religious

entity and which was only too successful. A hundred years after the emancipation, the historian Rabi stresses, on the eve of the Dreyfus affair, French Judaism had become a wilderness. For all practical purposes, the descendants of the Jewish families of the First Empire had vanished. The sizeable Jewish communities of Bordeaux, Bayonne and the County of Avignon were gone. "Only Alsace still existed, protected by a linguistic barrier and an isolation which actually constituted its force." Another author quoted by Guichard underlines the well-known fact that the large majority of French Jews, though remaining within the fold, loosened their tie with Judaism in the exact proportion to their social promotion. After 1830–1840, the Jewish bourgeoisie of Paris was no longer strictly attached to Jewish tradition.

At the end of the 19th century, there were about 80,000 Jews in France, but half of them were on the verge of a rapid de-Judaization. The leaders of French Judaism at that period reveal extremely paradoxical traits. There we have Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934), who tied the name of this famous family forever to the history of modern Judaism. This man devoted his strongest efforts to the cause of a home for the oppressed Jews in Palestine, but he was violently anti-Zionist! He used to say, "A Zionist is an American Jew who gives money to an English Jew in order to bring a Polish Jew to Palestine." He refused to propagate the idea of a Jewish State for fear of antagonizing the Arabs, yet today his name is venerated in Israel on the same level as that of Herzl or Weizmann.

The case of Bernard Lazare is similar. In 1894, though admiring the genuine Jewishness of the Am-

sterdam Jews, he wrote, in his book on anti-Semitism, "The Jews must de-Judaize and denationalize themselves." With the Dreyfus case, however, he changed his tune and not only vigorously fought the anti-Semitism of the left and the right, but strongly exalted Jewish nationalism. The Dreyfus trial developed into a watershed of Jewish history, mainly because the Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl, covered it and was so impressed by the ravages of anti-Semitism that he decided to make an end of Diaspora persecution by the revival of the ancient Jewish State. Despite the "affair," France was free of pogroms, and the anti-Semitism there was purely "doctrinal" and theoretical, except for Algeria, where violent outbreaks of the Polish-Russian type occurred in 1898. Yet, there was Edouard Drumont, whose book, *La France Juive*, published in 1886, had such a success that, in 1889, he felt compelled to found *la Ligue antisémitique*, which lasted up to the beginning of World War I. He also launched the daily, *La Libre Parole*, which still existed in 1936 when Léon Blum became Prime Minister of a Popular Front government. (This reviewer shall never forget that, at this period, at the access to many Paris stations, brochures were distributed bearing the title: *Blum, allez-vous en!* (Blum, Go Away!)) Typical of this movement was the fact that the leaders of French Catholicism, including Cardinal Desprez, Archbishop of Toulouse, were most actively involved in it.

The most important spokesmen of literary anti-Semitism were Charles Maurras and Leon Daudet, head of the *Action Française*. Yet, there arose counter-movements. Charles Péguy, a former socialist transformed into a religious nationalist, demonstrated his

sympathy for the Jews and even helped many of them return to their inherited faith. After World War I, there were again bad fluctuations towards anti-Semitism impelling Bernard Lecache to found the *Ligue internationale contre l'antisémitisme* in 1926. In 1939, the number of Jews had swelled to 280,000, but there was no collaboration between autochthonous Jews and immigrants from the East, who set up their own organization, called *Fédération des sociétés juives de France*. By that time there were numerous Hasidic synagogues in France.

This period was rich in French Jewish intellectual achievements which were acclaimed even by non-Jews who suddenly showed a lively interest in Jewish themes. Armand Lunel, troubadour of Southern French Judaism, received the coveted prix Renaudet for his novel *Nicole Peccavi*, devoted to the search for a lost Jewish identity. Edmond Fleg published his credo *Pourquoi je suis juif*, in 1928 and, in 1939, his *Anthologie juive*, a monument of Judaic culture. Many East-European Jews have given France, their adopted country, a place of distinction in the field of painting: Chagall, Soutine, Segal, Gotlieb.

In 1940, as was to be expected, only a handful of the highly assimilated French Jews understood the true character of the Vichy collaborators. While a large portion of them ended in Hitler's crematoria, expedited there by Pétain's *Union général des juifs de France*, Daniel Mayer, today president of the League of Human Rights, and David Knout, founder of the *Organization juive de combat*, organized the resistance with other courageous men, among whom was the great historian, Marc Bloch, who was arrested in 1944,

tortured and executed by the Nazis. In the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Auschwitz and Jaworzne, 24 *grands Rabbins* and other French rabbis were killed.

In 1945, French Jewry counted its losses; there were 200,000 to 220,000 left, after 80,00 to 100,000 had perished as victims of Hitler's "final solution." But whereas the Dreyfus affair had awakened the dormant spirit of French Jewry, the horror of the Nazi persecution again pushed the majority towards assimilation. However, two major events saved them from a relapse into their old mistakes: the repatriation and massive immigration of the North-African Jews, on the one hand, and the Six-day War, which gave many Jews a profound pride in their Jewishness, on the other.

Today, French Judaism is completely transformed, Guichard recognizes. The novelist, Roger Iker, speaks of the "end of the Marrano spirit," and Paul Elkann, the president of the Israelitic Consistory of Paris, says: "Up to now, the Jews have fought for the right to equality; now they fight for the right of being different in the framework of equality." In 1971, the end of confessionalism has arrived among the young generation; they do not consider themselves any more as "Frenchmen of the Jewish religion," but as Jews of French nationality.

The arrival of the Sefardim from the former North African colonies has had demographic significance for the future of French Judaism and has also provided a tremendous spiritual impetus and uplift for all French Jews. This group is not ashamed of its Judaism, considering it a living force. The younger members are politically Zionist and religiously Orthodox. Since 1966, the geographic distribution is as

follows: of the 501,700 Jews in France, 313,000 are in Paris and its suburbs; 58,500 are in the East (with Alsace-Lorraine); 4,100 in the North, 5,300 in the West, 5,000 in the Center and 116,800 in the South. How the spirit of French Judaism has changed can be easily concluded from a statement in the Parisian weekly, *La Tribune juive*, stressing: "Zionism is an essential and constitutive dimension of the Jewish soul."

Guichard, who is fascinated by the unification process of Israel, devotes a special chapter to the new State of Israel, another to "Jewish identity," a third to "Jewish legalism and mysticism," and recommends to the Christians a "reevaluation of Jewish mysticism." His last chapters deal with the grave injustice which the Church has committed against the Jews, from its foundation up to our time. Anti-Zionism, he underlines, is nothing but another form of anti-Semitism, and he concludes: "... the attachment to the land of Israel defines for the Jew his Jewishness. Under these circumstances, it is simply impossible to deprive and dispossess the Jew of the country which constitutes his right of being and, at the same time, proclaim that one does not attack him."

It grieves us that we must call the attention of the reader to two strange errors which could have been avoided, and which should be eliminated in any future edition. Guichard confuses the German-Jewish philosopher, Theodor Lessing, who coined the term "Jewish self-hatred" (he was murdered by the Nazis in 1933), with the German poet, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who lived in the 18th century. Furthermore, he considers the German philosopher, Friedrich Nie-

tzsche, a great friend of the Jews, to be an anti-Semite even though he broke with his own sister and with Richard Wagner because of their anti-Semitic activities. It's true that Abba Eban committed the same error, but. . . .

HENRY WALTER BRANN, formerly of Rutgers University, writes widely on Jewish questions, past and present.

•

Valuable Digging

The Ancient Synagogues of the Iberian Peninsula. By DON A. HALPERIN. U. of Florida Social Sciences Monograph. U. of Florida Press, 1969. 82 pp. \$2.00.

Reviewed by NORMAN ROTH.

THERE is a surprising paucity of literature on the history and nature of the synagogue, especially in the Medieval period, so that the appearance of an attractive and carefully worked-out monograph on some of the synagogues of Spain is, therefore, all the more welcome. Mr. Halperin, whose background is apparently in architecture and building design, brings a fresh approach to the subject and, if the reader is to have any regrets, it is that the author does not possess an equally competent historical background. This fact is evidenced by his apparent willingness to accept the overexuberant conclusion of a Spanish writer that the Hebrew language had more influence in the development of Castilian than did Latin (p. 6, and note), and his assertion that it can be proved that ancient Judaism was not monotheistic from the statement of the Ten Commandments "you shall have no other gods before me"—an error from which even

an elementary knowledge of Hebrew (or consultation with an authority) could have saved him.

But these are minor irritations that do not really detract from the essential plan of the monograph, which is to describe the existing synagogues and the remains of others in the Iberian peninsula. Unfortunately, the title does not convey this impression and seems rather to claim to present a comprehensive account of *all* the synagogues. If, in fact, this were the intent of the author, and he nowhere presents a disclaimer, then his neglect of some important work by his predecessors is unfortunate. The bibliography indicates that Neuman (incorrectly cited as Neumark) and Lindo have been consulted, but additional valuable information could have been gleaned from the writings of Yizhak (Fritz) Baer. More importantly, Samuel Krauss (a scholar of whom the author is not unaware, since he makes reference to one of his earlier works), in his pioneering work, *Korot batei ha-tefillah be-Yisrael* (New York, 1955), more than doubles the list of known synagogues in Spain and Portugal, with very little duplication.

What is particularly unfortunate about this neglect is that Halperin's monograph is not the result merely of "armchair research," but represents the fruits of two field trips to Spain and Portugal for detailed on-site examinations of the remains of synagogues and of synagogues converted into churches. A researcher undertaking such an arduous task would certainly be well-advised to consult all of the available resource material and persons expert in the field. That he failed to do so detracts not a little

from the value of an otherwise significant contribution to the study of Spanish Jewry and of Jewish history in general.

The major synagogues are carefully described in detail as to their design and construction, with supplements, in most cases, of very fine photographs and plan drawings. Even in the descriptions of such well-known, and fairly thoroughly discussed, synagogues as the famous "El Transito" and "La Blanca" of Toledo, the author has managed to avoid mere repetition of available information and provides some interesting and original insights. Remarkably, he was able to secure permission for the removal of some bricks while investigating an inexplicable niche in the Cordoba synagogue, and thus discovered a hidden room, the purpose of which remains a mystery.

By far the most significant of the author's contributions are his discovery that the Church of Bella Cruz in Paredes de Nava (northern Spain) may actually be a synagogue, dating perhaps from the year 1000 C.E., and that the Chapel of Mosen Rubi in Avila was, in all probability, built as a synagogue.

In summary, the monograph is a significant contribution that deserves to be welcomed and read by the serious student and the general reader as well. It could be hoped that it will stimulate further and more thorough research into the subject of the historical and sociological place of the synagogue in medieval Judaism.

NORMAN ROTH is a senior at the University of Denver and plans to pursue graduate studies in Jewish history and religion.

•

Contemporary Religious Questing

The New Religions. By JACOB NEEDLEMAN. Doubleday and Co. New York, 1970. 232 pp. \$5.95.

The Golden Core of Religion. By ALEXANDER SKUTCH. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. New York 1971. 264 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by JOEL ROSENBERG

OUR ancestors gave the word "Torah" a much richer connotation than we do today. To them, it meant something more like "the Teaching" or "the Way," and suggested something far deeper, more all-encompassing than the narrowly-conceived "Law" that Christianity came to see as its point of departure from Judaism. "Torah," as we know, included more than the five books of Moses, more than the cycle of *parshiyot* and *haftarot* to be read in the synagogue, more, even, than the Mishnah and Talmud, but, rather, the total collective wisdom of the Jews, and still more—its secret intoned casually by Jews in the synagogue, upon returning the literal Torah-scroll to its ark: "It is a Tree of Life to those that grasp it."

For the mystics this meant that "the Way" was a mirror of the cosmic process itself, and "those that grasp it" were secret collaborators in the unfolding of the universe. The Jew was more than a demographic number, his synagogue more than a suburban recreation center, his ritual life more than tepid forms: he was a partner in Creation, the synagogue a face of Godhead, and the ritual a form of higher language. Tradition addressed him personally, and included him. And his own poor life, riddled with political uncertainty and economic struggle, was an analogy—no, more, a microcosm—of the unfolding of the inner life of God.

Turning to our world, we can see that modern man in the West—Jew or Christian—can speak comfortably, perhaps reverently, of "The Bible" or "The Five Books of Moses," but has lost "the Way." Even Orthodox Jews may use the terms *halakhah* or *Talmud Torah*, and mean little more than conformity to Orthodoxy. However intellectually-searching or spiritually-fulfilling *Talmud Torah* may be, it is, today, something less than "the Way." The sense of cosmic certainty is gone. Western religion today demands, primarily, allegiance to a social pattern. But however desirable such allegiance may be, it cannot long hold the hearts of those religious seekers who wish to grasp the "Tree of Life," who require a more total relation to the cosmos. While both Judaism and Christianity have well-developed mystical traditions and rich mythological undercurrents, these are lost on the young, who are turning, in their post-drug spiritual search, toward the religions of the East.

Jacob Needleman's, *The New Religions*, is a brief survey of six Eastern religious movements in America that have attracted the young: the Zen Centers in San Francisco and Tassajara, California, the school of Meher Baba, Subud, Transcendental Meditation, the teachings of Krishnamurti, and the Tibetan Buddhists. The book does not pretend to be a serious academic study of these sects, nor an all-inclusive survey of the avant-garde religious scene. It is, unfortunately, marred by a sloppy typography, which does not distinguish carefully between the author's comments and those of the people he quotes, and by that common fault of all "what's happening" books, an uncritical and sometimes fawning enthusiasm for its subjects.

It is, however, a shade better

than the sleazy journalism suggested by its cover blurb ("Young America reaches for inwardness . . ."). Prof. Needleman is a psychologist who takes seriously the religious search of the young, and finds in the new sects something more than the sensational thrill-search or reality-evasion which we commonly associate with mysticism, especially with reference to underage devotees. Many of the young (and not-so-young) people whom Needleman portrays seem to be looking for a disciplined life. Their search is often founded on a careful sequence of exercises designed to enhance spiritual and cosmic awareness, and the teachers on whom they depend do not seem to be charlatans or pseudo-Messiahs, but, rather, men who have taken care to raise up trained disciples to teach "the Way" in their place. Of course, only time will tell. And much of the rhetoric (especially that of the avatar, Meher Baba, and the guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi) does invite suspicion.

Needleman himself is careful to point out that religious search must imply more than "experience" or simple personal fulfillment. The "new religions" began in our society when enough people grew weary of the endless pleasure-seeking that our consumer-culture encourages, became suspicious of the menagerie of desires within themselves, and sought a principle that would reveal desire's root, thus making them masters of desire rather than its slaves. Religious teachings, in the light of such a principle, must be perpetually searched and re-examined so as not to become, themselves, mere objects of desire. The paradox of this situation is demonstrated painfully in the relentlessly iconoclastic lectures of Krishnamurti, a master who repudiated his own promised des-

tiny as an avatar and spent his life teaching about the folly of the "attracted mind":

Krishnamurti: . . . When thought stops chasing its tail, what takes place at that moment, at that second?

Questioner: We don't know.

Krishnamurti: If you don't know, you haven't stopped chasing the tail.

Religious search, then, is not merely a quest for an "answer," but an attempt to become aware of the natural processes of one's own mind. In some traditions, this awareness is a revelation of the cosmic process itself. Western religion, says Needleman, has lost its sense of the cosmic:

The scientific revolution destroyed the idea of a sacramental universe. . . . Religious life became a matter of belief or performance; the question of man's *ableness* to believe or act faded into the background. . . . It was taken for granted that man had the *power* to be righteous; the only question was whether he had the goodness. Along with this the idea of religious *training* receded; man need only be told or persuaded.

Related to the sense of the "sacramental universe," is the concept of the social order of the religious community as a mirror of the cosmic creation and evolution, something Needleman notes of the order of Tibetan society, in which the people regard themselves as *tulkus*, or channels of divine energy, and the Dalai Lama the incarnation of Avalokitesvara, the principle of compassion. Misuse of such mythology has, in other societies, often served to dress authoritarian oppression. Comparison of Tibetan society with the mystical community of Israel and the mystical *Ecclesia* is both tempting and troublesome. What is the

qualitative difference in the doctrine between the conqueror and the underdog? How, with the latter, does the mystical community embody a cosmic process in which esoteric ritual (as opposed to human power and violence) will slowly but decisively flood the world with divine light?

The microcosmic nature of man is further reflected in the concept of a superconscious: a wider or higher Mind into which the seeking individual learns to integrate himself, identified in Hinduism as Brahman, or Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). The doctrine is developed in a homely and disarmingly simple style by Suzuki Roshi, master of the Zen Center in San Francisco, who calls this higher consciousness "Big Mind:"

"You should not try to make some tentative particular effort based on small mind like: 'My practice should be better.' My practice, you say, but zazen [sitting exercise] is not your practice, it is Buddha's practice. . . . Your effort is based on Big-Mind. . . ."

(At the Zen Center, when two students meet and perform the customary bow, they are not bowing to individuals, but to the Buddhahood of each other.)

If every man is a microcosm of the Divine or of the Cosmos, some are more aware of this identity, and see themselves as the highest human incarnation of God in a specific era, and destined to teach other men, an avatar, as Meher Baba claimed himself to be:

"I assert unequivocally that I am infinite consciousness. . . . Before me was Zoroaster, Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed. . . . My present Avatatic form is the last incarnation of this cycle of time, hence my Manifestation will be the greatest."

These words are jarring to the

Jewish reader. But while Judaism has, on the whole, chosen silence and circumspection on the nature of the Messiah, and has repeatedly rejected specific messianic or avatatic claims, the idea is not foreign to Jewish tradition. There is, of course, a keen difference between the cautious esoterism of the Hasidic idea of the *Zaddik ha-Dor* and the blatant exoteric claim of Meher Baba: "I am . . . the Divine Beloved, who loves you more than you love yourself." But the urge to have the divine will addressed more personally, more humanly, to restore the repeatedly damaged lines of relation between God and man, has motivated more than one prophet, mystic, or *zaddik*, for example, the enigmatic Nahman of Bratslav, to take on an identity more than human, larger than life, indeed, bordering on the avatatic. One regrets that Needleman treats the complex psychology of divine incarnation only in passing. He describes one young disciple who hitchhiked ten-thousand miles to meet Meher Baba. Do we write off that young man as a freak? Is there more than can be said about his yearning, and that of his peers (now flocking by the thousands to the new Jesus-rallies) for a personal relation to the divine? Can that yearning become, in the wrong hands, carelessly mistreated or demonically misshapen? And what would it mean to recognize the "right hands?"

Needleman hints at, but does not deliver, an evaluation of the challenge of the "new religions" to our churches and synagogues. He seems to have some first-hand acquaintance with the Kabbalistic and Hasidic lore of disciplined spiritual search, but declines to carry his investigation into the younger Jewish community, where, indeed, many interesting parallels to the Asian spiritual schools may now be

found. Some of these new influences in Judaism have already been traced by Herbert Weiner in *9 1/2 Mystics*, but many more currents and activities remain to be described. During the past year, the Boston University Hillel's "Free University" sponsored well-enrolled courses on spiritual research in Judaism, and Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach gave bi-monthly *shi'urim* on Hasidic texts to full houses. Rabbi Zalman Schachter of Winnipeg, has, for a number of years, proposed a type of co-educational Jewish monastic community, involved in the cultivation of spiritual discipline, and is, himself, the author of a pamphlet entitled *The First Step: A Primer of a Jew's Spiritual Life*. Members of *Havurat Shalom* in Boston are inaugurating an intensive seminar on Jewish lifestyles, with the focus on the key sacramental area of eating. Participants in the seminar will read rabbinic and Kabbalistic texts on the subject, study carefully their own daily patterns, and attempt to work out, as a group, a *halakhah* valid to their life situation.

The voluntary movement toward disciplined spiritual search among young Jews, back to an understanding of Torah and *halakhah* as "the Way," is new, and nowhere near explosive proportions, but qualified teachers are lacking. However, books such as Weiner's and Schachter's, and now Needleman's, point the way to a new concern.

Needleman's book was written amid the noise of civilization. Alexander Skutch's *The Golden Core of Religion* was written in the isolated rain forests of Costa Rica. Dr. Skutch, a naturalist by training and vocation, established a homestead in a remote Central American valley where, on rainy afternoons during the long wet season, he read widely in religion and philosophy, gradually working

out his own synthesis of religious ideas.

Although of a religious temperament, (he writes) I have been unable to accept any of the established religions, with their unproved dogmas and unsubstantiated promises. . . . By subjecting religion to a critical yet sympathetic examination, I hoped to extract some grains of gold from amidst the sands. The conclusion that I reached was that religion, more than any other institution, has encouraged men to care deeply—for themselves, their neighbors, and the larger world. Loving care is the golden core of religion.

The flavor of the book, perhaps because of Dr. Skutch's isolation from the world, is noticeably archaic. It represents the attempt of a man to escape a narrow, small-town, churchy sense of "religion" (I place the word in quotation marks to suggest the easy stultification which it has always fallen into) through immersion in a vast range of religious lore, East and West, primitive and civilized. But the attempt to extract "some grains of gold from amidst the sands" (the perpetual task of inspirational literature for skeptics) is no less narrow an outlook, no less unproved a dogma, no less unsubstantiated a promise, than those of the representatives and teachers of the established religions. The flat and preachy effect of the book might have been avoided had the author chosen to reveal more of the emotional roots of his own personal struggle for religious self-definition. When the scope of the book is admittedly personal, the reader wants to feel more personally addressed.

The breadth of the author's reading is impressive. I do not feel qualified to evaluate his sources, which extend over an enormous range of topics in anthropology and comparative religion, but, at

times, his handling of the complexities of historical scholarship seems somewhat cavalier. ("If Jesus, who was at heart a poet, ever composed a hymn in praise of his Father's creation, it has not been preserved for us. Yet scattered through his recorded speeches are expressions, such as the parable of the lilies, which suggest that he was keenly appreciative of natural beauty.") Such liberties are excusable, even desirable, if only the tone of the writing, with its sober marshalling of sources, were not so ostensibly scholarly.

Dr. Skutch repeatedly goes out of his way publicly to dismiss from our view any element of religious literature that seems irrational or offensive. He carries this effort even into casual parenthetical statements. ("The Psalms, which often repel the modern reader with their reiterated appeals for vengeance upon enemies . . .") This tendency is better illustrated by the following example:

The way men have abused the human body—their own and another's—makes one of the saddest chapters in the human story. For advantages far more often imaginary than real, the savage scarifies, lacerates, and mutilates himself and his children, often most horribly. . . . He seems to take a fierce delight in demonstrating the punish-

ment he can take, the pain he can endure.

Such a statement clearly seems to miss the point. The author's squeamishness should not blind him to a more sensitive understanding of the ways, often extreme by our cultural standards, in which men have tried to come to terms with evil. He might also ask whether civilized man's expurgation of tattooing, self-mutilation, and animal sacrifice has diminished his propensity for violence. There is another core of religion, not golden but no less important, that must be confronted.

Ultimately, one must feel sad about finding fault with Dr. Skutch's effort. There is nothing offensive about his central idea that loving care is the "golden core." Indeed, perhaps Dr. Skutch is consciously and awkwardly laboring out what we all unconsciously *want* to believe and to find substantiation for in our religious traditions. One has the impression that Dr. Skutch is probably a likable person. It is a paradox that the monumental works of religion and philosophy were often wrought by men, like Blake and Nietzsche, who believed themselves to be a bit unlikable.

JOEL ROSENBERG is a graduate student of the U. of California at Santa Cruz.

JUDAISM

**THE EDITORS OF JUDAISM
and
The American Jewish Congress**

take pleasure in announcing the publication of a

**TWENTY YEAR
CUMULATIVE INDEX
FOR JUDAISM
1952—1971**

Over 1200 papers are included

- A: INDEX OF AUTHORS
- B: SUBJECT INDEX OF ARTICLES
- C: INDEX OF REVIEWS

An indispensable tool for scholars, students and general readers in the field of Jewish religion, philosophy and ethics.

\$2.00 per copy

Gratis to 1972 subscribers

\$2.25

WINTER 1